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THE CAMBRIDGE BIBLE FOR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

THE BOOK OF

PSALMS

(PSALMS XC—CL)

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THE BOOK OF

PSALMS

Edited by

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DEAN OF ELY

BOOKS IV AND V

PSALMS XC—CL

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* * The Text adopted in this Edition is that of Dr Scrivener's *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*. A few variations from the ordinary Text, chiefly in the spelling of certain words, and in the use of italics, will be noticed. For the principles adopted by Dr Scrivener as regards the printing of the Text see his Introduction to the *Paragraph Bible*, published by the Cambridge University Press.

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The choice and flower of all things profitable in other books the Psalms do both more briefly contain, and more movingly also express, by reason of that poetical form wherewith they are written... What is there necessary for man to know which the Psalms are not able to teach? They are to beginners an easy and familiar introduction, a mighty augmentation of all virtue and knowledge in such as are entered before, a strong confirmation to the most perfect among others. Heroical magnanimity, exquisite justice, grave moderation, exact wisdom, repentance unfeigned, unwearied patience, the mysteries of God, the sufferings of Christ, the terrors of wrath, the comforts of grace, the works of Providence over this world, and the promised joys of that world which is to come, all good necessarily to be either known or done or had, this one celestial fountain yieldeth. Let there be any grief or disease incident into the soul of man, any wound or sickness named, for which there is not in this treasure-house a present comfortable remedy at all times ready to be found.

R. HOOKER.

INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

LYRIC poetry is the most ancient kind of poetry, and Hebrew poetry is mainly lyric. Neither epic nor dramatic poetry flourished in ancient Israel. Some indeed of the historical Psalms may be said to have an epic colouring, but they belong to the class of didactic narrative: Job and the Song of Songs may be called in a sense dramatic, but they do not appear to have been intended for performance on the stage[1]. The only independent branch of poetry in Israel was gnomic or proverbial poetry, which in the hands of the 'Wise Men' attained to a rich development, and must have exercised an important influence on the education of the people.

The Old Testament is the religious history of Israel, and the poetry preserved in the Book of Psalms is, as might be expected, religious poetry. Secular poetry no doubt existed[2], but, with

[1] See however Driver, *Lit. of O.T.*[6], p. 444, for the view that the Song may have been "designed to be acted, the different parts being personated by different characters," or represented by "the varied voice and gesture of a single reciter."

[2] Such as the drinking songs referred to in Amos vi. 5 (R.V.); Is. v. 12: harvest and vintage songs (Is. xvi. 10, 11; Jer. xlviii. 33): parables (Judg. ix. 8 ff.). Solomon's 'thousand and five songs' were probably of a secular character (1 Kings iv. 32). Poems like Exod. xv and Judg. v are essentially religious. The *Book of the Wars of Jehovah* (Num. xxi. 14), and the *Book of Jashar*, i.e. *the Upright* (Josh. x. 13; 2 Sam. i. 18), appear to have been collections of poems commemorating remarkable episodes of national history, and the characters and exploits of national heroes. In these no sharp line could be drawn between what was secular and what was religious.

the exception of a few fragments preserved in the historical books[1], it has not come down to us. The Psalter then is a collection of religious lyrics. Lyric poetry is defined as "that which directly expresses the individual emotions of the poet"; and religious lyric poetry is the expression of those emotions and feelings as they are stirred by the thought of God and directed God-wards. This is the common characteristic of the Psalms in all their manifold variety. Some are directly addressed to God, as petition or thanksgiving or praise: some are the communings of the soul with God, expressing its faith, its hope, its love, its needs, its fears, its aspirations, its joys, its triumphs: some celebrate the 'marvellous works' of God in nature and in history: some reflect upon the perplexing problems of life and their relation to the divine government of the world: but God is as it were the sun around which all revolves, and His light and heat illuminate and animate the whole.

The Psalms stand in an intimate relation to the whole of the Old Testament. They are the inspired response of the human heart to God's revelation of Himself, in Law and History and Prophecy and Philosophy.

The Psalmists celebrate *the moral law* as the guide of human conduct; they welcome *the ordinances of worship* and rejoice in the privilege of access to the presence of God in the Temple, as the crowning joy of life.

History supplies its lessons of God's goodness and man's ingratitude, thrown into the easily remembered form of didactic poetry. The recollection of the past is a warning for the present, the support of faith in the hour of trial, the ground of comfort in times of calamity.

The Psalms are closely connected with *Prophecy*. The term 'prophesying' is applied to the expression of religious fervour in chant and hymn (1 Sam. x. 10 ff.; xix. 20 ff.. 1 Chr. xxv. 1—3); and David's chief musicians, Heman, Asaph, and Jeduthun, are called 'seers' (1 Chr. xxv. 5; 2 Chr. xxix. 30; xxxv. 15). Sacred poetry often rises to prophetic foresight, or speaks with pro-

[1] E.g. Gen. iv. 23, 24; Num. xxi. 17, 18, 27—30; Judg. xv. 16; 1 Sam. xviii. 7.

phetic authority[1], while prophecy often passes into lyric poetry[2]. The passion for truth and righteousness, and the unquenchable belief that Jehovah's moral government of the world is working, surely if slowly, towards a glorious consummation in the establishment of His universal sovereignty, animate and inspire Psalmists not less than Prophets.

Several Psalms reflect the influence of the '*Wisdom*' or religious philosophy of Israel, both in its practical and in its speculative aspects. The moral lessons for every-day life collected in the Book of Proverbs, and the discussion of the problems of the world in Job and Ecclesiastes, find their echo in the poetry of the Psalter[3].

The importance of the Psalter for a just appreciation of the history of Israel is obvious. How meagre an idea of the higher religious life of Israel should we derive from the Historical Books apart from the Prophets: how imperfect still would be the picture drawn from the Historical Books and the Prophets without the warmth of colouring added to it by the Psalms. These alone give us a glimpse into the inner religion of the best spirits in the nation, and bear witness to the faith, the love, the devotion of pious souls, even under the limitations of the Old Covenant.

Hence it is essential to study the Psalms critically and historically, to endeavour to ascertain their original meaning, and to assign them to their proper place in the history and development of revelation; not only in order to give life and reality to the Psalms themselves, and to understand them better; but for the sake of the light which they throw upon the religious history of Israel, and the course of God's dealings with His people.

The inquiry is however one of extreme difficulty. The widest diversity of opinion prevails as to the date and authorship of the Psalms, and we must often be content to acknowledge that a Psalm cannot be assigned to a definite period, still less to a particular author, with any degree of certainty.

[1] See Ps. xii. 5; xlvi. 10; l. 4 ff.; lxxv. 2 ff.; lxxxi. 6 ff.; cx. 1.
[2] See e.g. Is. xii, xxv, xxvi; Nah. i. 2 ff.; Hab. iii.
[3] See especially Pss. xxxvii, xlix, lxxiii.

But after all, the critical and historical study of the Psalms is but a preliminary to the higher study of their spiritual meaning and their devotional use. The Psalter has been through all the centuries and will ever continue to be the one unique and inexhaustible treasury of devotion for the individual and for the Church. Through its guidance the soul learns to commune with God: it supplies the most fitting language for common worship.

To some it may seem almost a sacrilege to apply the methods of criticism to such a book. It may be disappointing to find that many Psalms once supposed to be David's must be relegated to a far later age; perplexing to find familiar renderings condemned, and long current interpretations abandoned.

But Holy Scripture conveys divine truth through the medium of human language, and it is our duty to investigate to the full the meaning and the force of that language. Criticism is not the enemy but the handmaid of devotion. As we learn to understand more of the original meaning of the Psalms for those who wrote and used them, we shall learn more of their true meaning for ourselves.

But that meaning is not limited to the 'original' sense, if by this is meant only that sense which the writers could recognise in their own words. Every true poet's words contain far more than he himself at the moment intends. And the words of these inspired poets were so shaped and moulded by the Holy Spirit that they might grow and expand with the growth of revelation, and "gather wealth in the course of ages." The Psalms belong indeed to the Old and not to the New Testament. They are the product of the Jewish and not of the Christian Church[1]. But "the Psalter in its spiritual fulness

[1] "It is true that not a little of the colouring of the Psalms is derived from the ritual and order of the old dispensation, and has now become antiquated; but practical religion does not refuse those bonds of connexion with the past. The believing soul is never anxious to separate its own spiritual life from the spiritual life of the fathers. Rather does it cling with special affection to the links that unite it to the church of the Old Testament; and the forms which, in their literal sense, are now antiquated, become to us an additional group of figures in the rich poetic imagery of the Hebrew hymnal." Robertson Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, p. 191.

belongs to no special time"; and the old words are 'fulfilled' in Christ. The Christian Church may, nay must, use them as they are illuminated by the light of the Gospel. And if the saying, "pectus est quod facit theologum[1]," is true of the study of the Bible generally, it is most true of the study of that book which has well been called "the Bible within the Bible," the very "heart of the Bible."

CHAPTER II.

THE POSITION, NAMES, NUMBERING, AND DIVISIONS OF THE PSALTER.

1. *The position of the Psalter in the Old Testament.* The Hebrew title of the Old Testament indicates the three great divisions, in which, from very early times[2], the Canonical Books were arranged by the Jewish Church:—*Law*, *Prophets*, *Writings*. The Book of Psalms belongs to the third of these divisions, the *Writings* or *Hagiographa*. But its position in the group has not always been the same[3]. In the MSS. of the German type, which our printed editions follow, the Psalms

[1] "It is the heart which makes the theologian."

[2] This triple division is recognised in the Prologue to Ecclesiasticus, written about B.C. 132 by the author's grandson, who translated the book from Hebrew into Greek. "Whereas many great things have been delivered unto us by means of (*διὰ*) the law and the prophets and the others that have followed after them . . . . . my grandfather Jesus, when he had diligently given himself to the reading of the law and the prophets and the other books of our fathers (*τῶν ἄλλων πατρίων βιβλίων*) . . . was drawn on also himself to write something pertaining to instruction and wisdom." And again, apologising for the imperfections of his version, he says: "For words spoken in Hebrew have not precisely the same force, when they are translated into another tongue: and not only this treatise, but even the law and the prophecies and the rest of the books (*τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν βιβλίων*) differ in no small degree when they are spoken in their own language." The clear distinction which is here drawn between the Canonical books and Ecclesiasticus, and the reference to the Greek Version of the O.T. as already in existence, should be carefully noticed. See further below, p. xlvi.

[3] See Ginsburg, *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, ch. i; Ryle, *Canon of the O.T.*, ch. xii.

stand first, followed by Proverbs and Job. That this was the ancient order is at least a probable inference from Luke xxiv. 44 where "the Psalms" stands by the side of "the Law" and "the Prophets" as the title of the Hagiographa in general[1].

The order of the books of the O.T. in our English Bibles is that which had come to be adopted in the Vulgate by the sixteenth century. It corresponds more nearly to the arrangement of the LXX found in the Vatican MS. than to that of the Hebrew, but differs from it in placing Job before the Psalter instead of after the Song of Songs, and in placing the Minor Prophets after instead of before the Major Prophets, and arranging them as they stand in the Hebrew text.

2. *Names of the Psalter.* The Septuagint translators employed the word ψαλμός[2], *psalm*, to render the Heb. word *mizmōr*, which was the technical term for a song with musical accompaniment (see p. xix). The collection was styled simply *Psalms*, as in the Vatican MS. (ψαλμοί, cp. Luke xxiv. 44), or *The Book of Psalms* (Luke xx. 42; Acts i. 20), or in later times *The Psalter*, ψαλτήρ or ψαλτήριον[3]. The Greek words have come down to us through the Latin *psalmus*, *psalterium*.

In the Hebrew Bible the title of the collection is *Book of Praises*, or simply, *Praises: Sepher Tehillim* abbreviated into *Tillim* or *Tillin*[4]. This title was known to Hippolytus[5] and

[1] Comp. too Philo (B.C. 20—A.D. 50) *de vita contempl.* (ii. 475): νόμους καὶ λόγια θεσπισθέντα διὰ προφητῶν καὶ ὕμνους καὶ τὰ ἄλλα οἷς ἐπιστήμη καὶ εὐσέβεια συναύξονται καὶ τελειοῦνται. "Laws and oracles delivered by prophets and hymns and the other writings by which knowledge and piety are increased and perfected."

[2] ψαλμός denotes (1) the music of a stringed instrument; (2) a song sung to the accompaniment of such music.

[3] ψαλτήριον meant originally a *stringed instrument*, a *psaltery* (frequently in the LXX), and was afterwards applied to a *collection of psalms*, a *psalter*. In this sense it is used by Hippolytus, Athanasius, Epiphanius, and stands as the title of the Psalms in the Alexandrine MS.

[4] The word is derived from the same root as *Hallelujah*, and the verb is frequently used in connexion with the Temple Service (1 Chron. xvi. 4 &c.).

[5] p. 188, ed. Lagarde. Ἑβραῖοι περιέγραψαν τὴν βίβλον Σέφρα θελείμ. The genuineness of the fragment of Hippolytus which treats of the inscriptions, authorship, divisions, and order of the Psalms, is however doubtful. See Dr Salmon in the *Dict. of Christian Biography*, iii. 103.

Origen[1] in the first half of the third century A.D., and to Jerome[2]. Though the word *praise* occurs frequently in the Psalter, only one Psalm (cxlv) bears the title *A Praise*, and the name *Book of Praises* probably originated in the use of the collection as the hymn-book of the Second Temple[3]. Many indeed of the Psalms cannot be so designated, but no more fitting name could be found for a book, of which praise and thanksgiving are predominant characteristics, and which ends with a diapason of Hallelujahs.

Another title, apparently that of an early collection of Davidic Psalms, was *Tephillōth* or *Prayers* (lxxii. 20)[4]. Only five Psalms, xvii, lxxxvi, xc, cii, cxlii, are so entitled; but again, although some Psalms (e.g. i, ii) contain no direct address to God, the title is a suitable one. Prayer in its widest sense includes all elevation of the mind to God[5]. Hannah's thanksgiving and Habakkuk's ode are both described as prayer (1 Sam. ii. 1; Hab. iii. 1).

3. *Numbering of the Psalms.* The Massoretic Text and the LXX both reckon a total of 150 Psalms. The 151st Psalm, which is added in the LXX, is expressly said to be "outside the number[6]." But this reckoning has not been uniformly

[1] In Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* vi. 25 (ed. Burton) Σφαρθελλείμ.

[2] In the Preface to his *Psalterium iuxta Hebraeos* (p. 2, ed. Lagarde): "titulus ipse Hebraicus *sephar tallim*, quod interpretatur *volumen hymnorum*."

[3] Cp. Neh. xii. 46.

[4] The LXX rendering ὕμνοι however may point to another reading תהלות, *praises*.

[5] "Lege totum Psalterium...nihil erit nisi ad Deum in cunctis operibus deprecatio." S. Jerome *contra Pelag.* i. 5.

[6] This Psalm appears to have been translated from a Hebrew original, but the contrast between it and the canonical Psalms is so noteworthy that it seems worth while to append a version of it.

"This Psalm was written by David with his own hand (and it is outside the number) when he fought in single combat with Goliath.

1. I was little among my brethren,
   and the youngest in my father's house;
   I fed my father's sheep.
2. My hands made a harp,
   my fingers contrived a psaltery.
3. And who will declare unto my Lord?
   He is the Lord, it is He that heareth.

observed. Some ancient Jewish authorities reckon 149, others 147 Psalms[1], the latter number, as the Jerusalem Talmud says, "according to the years of our father Jacob." These totals are obtained by uniting one or all of the pairs i, ii : ix, x : cxiv, cxv : or other Psalms. Although the Hebrew and the LXX agree in the total, they differ in the details of the numeration. The LXX unites ix and x, cxiv and cxv, and divides cxvi and cxlvii. It may be useful to subjoin a comparative table, for while our modern English versions follow the Hebrew reckoning, the Vulgate and the older English Versions (e.g. Wycliffe and Coverdale) and modern Roman Catholic versions based upon it, follow that of the LXX.

Hebrew (Later English Versions).		LXX (Vulgate. Older English Versions. Rom. Cath. Versions).
i—viii.	=	i—viii.
ix, x.	=	ix.
xi—cxiii.	=	x—cxii.
cxiv, cxv.	=	cxiii.
cxvi.	=	cxiv, cxv.
cxvii—cxlvi.	=	cxvi—cxlv.
cxlvii.	=	cxlvi, cxlvii.
cxlviii—cl.	=	cxlviii—cl.

Thus for the greater part of the Psalter the numeration of the LXX is one behind that of the Hebrew.

The English reader should also remember that the title of a Psalm, when it consists of more than one or two words, is reckoned as a verse, and sometimes (e.g. in Ps. li) as two verses, in the Hebrew text. Attention to this is necessary in using the

4. He sent His angel,
and took me from my father's sheep,
and anointed me with the oil of his anointing.
5. My brethren were comely and tall,
and in them the Lord had no pleasure.
6. I went forth to meet the Philistine,
and he cursed me by his idols.
7. But I drew the sword from his side, and beheaded him,
and took away the reproach from the children of Israel."

[1] So in a MS. described in Ginsburg's *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, p. 777. He mentions other unusual numerations of 159 and 170 Psalms, pp. 536, 725.

references of commentaries which, like that of Delitzsch, follow the numbering of the verses in the original.

4. *Divisions of the Psalter.* The Psalter has from ancient times been divided into five books:

Book i = Pss. i—xli:
„ ii = Pss. xlii—lxxii:
„ iii = Pss. lxxiii—lxxxix:
„ iv = Pss. xc—cvi:
„ v = Pss. cvii—cl.

These divisions are indicated by doxologies of a liturgical character, differing slightly in form, at the close of the first four books (xli. 13, lxxii. 18, 19, lxxxix. 52, cvi. 48). The first three of these doxologies obviously form no part of the Psalms to which they are appended. The fourth however (see note on Ps. cvi. 48) appears to belong to the Psalm, and not to be merely an editor's addition to mark the end of a book. It came however to be regarded (somewhat inappropriately, for Pss. cvi and cvii are closely connected) as marking the division between Books iv and v. No special doxology is added to Ps. cl. It is in itself an appropriate concluding doxology for the whole Psalter.

This five-fold division is earlier than the LXX, which contains the doxologies. It is often referred to by Jewish and Christian authorities, and compared to the five books of the Pentateuch.

Thus the *Midrash*[1] on Ps. i. 1: "Moses gave the Israelites the five books of the Law, and to correspond to these David gave them the Book of Psalms containing five books."

Hippolytus [?] (ed. Lagarde, p. 193): "Let it not escape your notice...that the Hebrews divided the Psalter also into five books, that it might be a second Pentateuch."

Jerome, in the *Prologus Galeatus:* "Tertius ordo Hagiographa possidet. Et primus liber incipit a Job. Secundus a

[1] An ancient Jewish commentary, probably however in its present form not earlier than the 10th century A.D. But older Jewish authorities recognise the division. See Robertson Smith, *Old Test. in Jewish Church*, p. 195.

David, quem quinque incisionibus (*sections*) et uno Psalmorum volumine comprehendunt." No doubt he chose this form of expression carefully, for in his preface to the Psalter he somewhat passionately affirms the unity of the Book[1].

The division is referred to by most of the Fathers, some of whom, as Ambrose, explain it allegorically; others, as Gregory of Nyssa, find in the several books so many steps rising to moral perfection. As will be shewn presently, the division of the books in part corresponds to older collections out of which the Psalter was formed, in part is purely artificial, and probably had its origin in the wish to compare the Psalter with the Pentateuch.

CHAPTER III.

THE TITLES OF THE PSALMS.

To nearly all the Psalms in the first three Books, and to some of those in the fourth and fifth Books, are prefixed titles, designating either (1) the character of the poem, or (2) matters connected with its musical setting, or (3) its liturgical use, or (4) the author, or perhaps more strictly, the collection from which the Psalm was taken, or (5) the historical occasion for which it was written or which it illustrates. Only 34 Psalms have no title, namely Pss. i, ii, x, xxxiii, xliii, lxxi, xci, xciii—xcvii, xcix, civ—cvii, cxi—cxix, cxxxv—cxxxvii, cxlvi—cl.

Such titles may occur separately or in combination. Many of them are extremely obscure, and their meanings can only be conjectured. All that will be attempted here is to give the most probable explanations. An elaborate discussion of the innumerable interpretations which have been proposed would be mere waste of time. Some special titles which occur but once will be

[1] "Scio quosdam putare psalterium in quinque libros esse divisum... nos Hebraeorum auctoritatem secuti et maxime apostolorum, qui semper in novo testamento psalmorum librum nominant, unum volumen adserimus."

discussed in the introductions to the Psalms to which they belong.

1. *Titles descriptive of the character of the poem.*

Psalm[1]. *Mizmōr*, rendered *Psalm*, is a technical term found only in the titles of the Psalter[2]. It is prefixed to 57 Psalms, and with few exceptions is preceded or followed by the name of the author, generally that of David. The verb from which *mizmōr* is derived occurs frequently in the Psalter (e.g. vii. 17, xlvii. 6, 7, cxlix. 3) but rarely elsewhere (Judg. v. 3; [2 Sam. xxii. 50; 1 Chr. xvi. 9]; Is. xii. 5). It appears originally to have meant *to make melody*, like the Lat. *canere*, but came to be applied specially to instrumental music, as distinguished from vocal music. *Mizmōr* then means *a piece of music*, a song with instrumental accompaniment.

Song[3]. *Shīr*, rendered *song*, is the general term for a song or canticle. It occurs 30 times in the titles, generally preceded or followed by *mizmōr*, and not unfrequently in the text of the Psalms (e.g. xxviii. 7, xl. 3, cxxxvii. 3, 4), and in other books. It is applied to secular as well as sacred songs (Gen. xxxi. 27; Jud. v. 12; 1 Kings iv. 32; Is. xxx. 29; Neh. xii. 27, 36, 46).

Maschīl[4] is found as the title of thirteen[5] Psalms, eleven of which are in Books ii and iii. The meaning is obscure. (*a*) It has been explained to mean *a didactic psalm*. Comp. the use of the cognate verb in xxxii. 8, 'I will instruct thee.' But of the Psalms which bear the title only xxxii and lxxviii are specifically 'didactic.' (*b*) Delitzsch supposes it to mean *a meditation*. (*c*) Most probable however is Ewald's explanation, *a skilful psalm*. The word is used in Ps. xlvii. 7, 'sing ye praises *with understanding*' (Heb. *maschīl*), R.V. marg., *in a skilful psalm*.

[1] מִזְמוֹר: LXX ψαλμός: Vulg. *psalmus*.

[2] It occurs in the original Hebrew of Ecclesiasticus xlix. 1, in the sense of *music* or *song* generally: "as *mizmōr* at a banquet of wine."

[3] שִׁיר: LXX in titles usually ᾠδή, in text ᾠδή or ᾆσμα.

[4] מַשְׂכִּיל: LXX συνέσεως or εἰς σύνεσιν: Vulg. *intellectus* or *ad intellectum*: Jer. *eruditio*.

[5] xxxii, xlii, xliv, xlv, lii, liii, liv, lv, lxxiv, lxxviii, lxxxviii, lxxxix, cxlii.

It may have denoted something more definite than the ordinary *mizmōr*, a psalm with musical setting of a specially delicate and artistic character, 'a *cunning* psalm.'

Michtam occurs in the title of six Psalms, preceded or followed by *of David*[1]. It is probably, like *Maschīl*, a musical term, the meaning of which cannot now be determined. A few of the many explanations which have been given may be mentioned. (1) The LXX and Theodotion render it στηλογραφία or εἰς στηλογραφίαν, *an inscription* or *for an inscription*. Cp. the Targ., *an excellent inscription* or *writing*. Hence Delitzsch explains, *a poem of epigrammatic character*, containing pithy or expressive sayings. (2) In defiance of all grammar and analogy Aquila Symmachus and Jerome treat the word as a compound, and render it as an epithet of David, *the humble and sincere* or *blameless*. (3) *A golden Psalm* (A.V. marg.), with reference to the preciousness of its contents, like the *golden sayings* (χρυσᾶ ἔπη) of Pythagoras. (4) An unpublished poem. (5) A Psalm of hidden, mysterious meaning.

Shiggaion[2] occurs in the title of Ps. vii, and the Prayer of Habakkuk is said to be *set to Shigionoth*. The word is derived from a verb which means *to wander*, and it probably denotes a particular style of poetry or music, or it may include both, and mean 'a dithyrambic poem in wild ecstatic wandering rhythms, with corresponding music.'

A Prayer stands as the title of five Psalms (xvii, lxxxvi, xc, cii, cxlii). In the subscription to Ps. lxxii the preceding collection of Davidic Psalms is designated as *The prayers of David*[3]. Hab. iii is called *A prayer of Habakkuk*. Cp. 1 Sam. ii. 1.

A Praise is the title of one Psalm only (cxlv), though *Praises* came eventually to be the title of the whole book.

[1] xvi, lvi—lx.

[2] שִׁגְיוֹנוֹת plur. : LXX in Ps. vii simply ψαλμός, in Hab. μετὰ ᾠδῆς. Jer. *ignoratio*, or *pro ignoratione*. So Aq. ἀγνόημα, Symm. Theod. ὑπὲρ ἀγνοίας, supposing it to refer to the contents of the Psalm.

[3] The LXX ὕμνοι may however point to another reading תהלות, *praises*.

2. *Titles connected with the musical setting or performance.*

To the chief Musician[1]: R.V. **For the Chief Musician**: perhaps rather **Of the Precentor**: is prefixed to fifty-five Psalms, of which only two (lxvi, lxvii) are anonymous, and most bear the name of David. Fifty-two of these are in Books I—III, and three in Book V. It is found also in the subscription to Habakkuk's Prayer (Hab. iii. 19). The verb, of which the word is a participle, is used in Chronicles and Ezra in the sense of *superintending* (1 Chr. xxiii. 4; 2 Chr. ii. 2, 18; xxxiv. 12; Ezra iii. 8, 9), and in 1 Chr. xv. 21 in the specific sense of *leading* (R.V.) the music. There can be little doubt that the word *m'naççēach* means the *precentor*, or *conductor* of the Temple choir, who trained the choir and led the music, and that it refers to the use of the Psalm in the Temple Services. The preposition prefixed to it is generally rendered *for*, and is supposed to mean that the Psalm was to be handed over to the precentor for musical setting and performance. This explanation however does not account for the rarity of the term in the later books, where the Psalms are predominantly liturgical in character. It seems more probable that the preposition should be rendered *of*, and that it indicates that the Psalm belonged to an older collection known as *The Precentor's Collection*, in the same way as the titles 'of David,' 'of Asaph,' 'of the sons of Korah' probably indicate the collections from which the Psalms bearing them were taken[2]. The reason commonly given for its absence in Books IV and V, that it was unnecessary, because the destination of these Psalms was obvious, is hardly satisfactory. Many of

[1] לַמְנַצֵּחַ (*lam'naççēach*). The Targum renders it *to praise*, giving the general sense. But the other Ancient Versions were completely at a loss. The LXX renders εἰς τὸ τέλος, Vulg. *in finem*, 'unto the end' or 'for ever,' reading the word as a substantive לָנֶצַח, in the sense of לָנֶצַח (*lānēçach*). The other Greek Versions and Jerome connected it with the sense of *victory*, which is one of the meanings of the root in late Heb. and Aramaic. Thus Aquila τῷ νικοποιῷ, 'for the victor.' Symmachus, ἐπινίκιος, 'a song of victory': Theodotion, εἰς τὸ νίκος, 'for the victory': Jerome, *victori*. So too the LXX in Hab. iii. 19, τοῦ νικῆσαι. These renderings gave the ingenuity of the Fathers great opportunities for allegorical interpretations.

[2] See the *Oxford Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 684.

the Psalms in Books I—III which have it prefixed to them, are clearly intended for public use. It seems to have been a term belonging to an older collection, which went out of use in later times. At any rate the translators of the LXX did not understand its meaning.

Selah. This term, though not belonging to the titles, may conveniently be discussed here.

The word is found 71 times in the Psalter in 39 Psalms, 3 times in Habakkuk iii, and nowhere else in the O.T.[1] In 16 Psalms it occurs once; in 15 twice; in 7 (and in Hab. iii) three times: in 1, four times. Of these Psalms 9 are in Book I: 17 in Book II: 11 in Book III; none in Book IV: 2 only in Book V. It is to be further noted that all these Psalms, with the exception of the anonymous lxvi and lxvii, bear the name of David or of the Levitical singers (the sons of Korah, Asaph, Heman, Ethan); and all bear indications of being intended to be set to music. The majority of them (28 of the 39: cp. Hab. iii. 19) have, 'For the Chief Musician' in the title, frequently with a further specification of the instruments or melody (iv, ix, xlvi, liv, lv, lvii, lix, lx, lxi, lxii, lxvii, lxxv, lxxvi, lxxvii, lxxxi, lxxxiv, lxxxviii; Hab. iii. 19). Of the remaining eleven, eight are designated *mizmōr*, 'psalm,' two *maschīl*, and one *shiggaion*.

It may fairly be inferred from these facts that Selah is a technical term of great antiquity, having reference to musical accompaniment. Its precise meaning, however, is quite uncertain. There are two main lines of ancient tradition:

(*a*) By the LXX always, and by Symmachus and Theodotion generally, it is rendered διάψαλμα (*diapsalma*), which may denote either louder playing, *forte*; or, more probably, *an instrumental interlude*[2], while the singing ceased. The Syriac (with a few exceptions) gives an abbreviation of the Greek word. The Vulgate omits it entirely.

[1] It occurs in the third and eighteenth of the *Shemōneh Esreh* or *Eighteen Benedictions* of the Jewish Liturgy, and its Greek equivalent is found twice in the Psalms of Solomon (xvii. 31; xviii. 10).

[2] Cp. διαύλιον, an interlude on the flute. The explanation *a change of rhythm or melody, or a transition in the sense*, can hardly be right, as *Selah* occurs sometimes at the end of a Psalm.

(*b*) The most ancient Jewish traditions interpret the word to mean *for ever*. So the Targum, with some variety of rendering, Aquila, the 'Fifth' and 'Sixth' Greek versions, Symmachus, Theodotion, and the Syriac occasionally; and Jerome, who renders *semper*[1].

Of these ancient renderings, that of the LXX probably preserves a true tradition as to the usage of *Selah*: but the meaning 'always' is based on no known etymology, and is obviously unsuitable in the majority of passages.

Of the multitude of modern explanations the most generally accepted is that *Selah* is derived from a root meaning *to raise*, and signifies 'Up!'

It is then a direction to the musicians to strike up, either with a louder accompaniment, or with an interlude while the singing ceased. This explanation is supported by the conjunction of *Selah* in Ps. ix. 16 with *Higgaion*, a term used of instrumental music in Ps. xcii. 3. It is moreover confirmed by an examination of the passages in which *Selah* occurs. In the majority of cases it is found at the end of a strophe, or before the introduction of some fresh thought, where an interlude would be most natural (Ps. iii 2, 4, 8; xxiv. 6, 10; xliv. 8; xlvi. 3, 7, 11; lxvi. 4, 7, 15); or before some appeal or utterance which would be distinguished from what preceded and would be emphasised by an interlude or by a stronger accompaniment (Ps. vii. 5; l. 6; lx. 4; lxxv. 3; lxxxi. 7; lxxxiii. 8). There are no doubt many instances which do not appear to come under these general principles; but the Hebrew idea of what was fitting by way of accompaniment may have differed from ours; and in some cases the accuracy of the Massoretic Text is doubtful. The Septuagint does not always agree with it in the insertion or omission of *Selah*, and an obscure

[1] For an interesting account of the various opinions held in his day consult his letter to Marcella (Opp. i. col. 135, ed. Vallarsi). He decides in favour of the rendering *semper*, 'always,' because it is that given by Aquila, 'the most careful interpreter of the meanings of Hebrew words,' and says that it is designed 'to connect what precedes with what follows, or to shew that what has been said is everlasting': and compares the use of the word with that of *Amen* or *Shalom* (peace), to mark the end of a passage, and confirm its contents.

technical term would be specially liable to be omitted or wrongly inserted.

The explanation given in the *Oxford Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 699, also deserves consideration. *Selah* is there explained to be a liturgical direction to the congregation, meaning *Lift up* your voices in the benediction 'Blessed be Jehovah for ever and ever'; or *Extol* Jehovah for ever and ever. Accordingly it indicates the place of the benedictions (cp. Neh. ix. 5), and the tradition that it means *for ever* is accounted for by the closing words of the benediction.

Higgaion occurs in ix. 16 along with Selah as a musical direction, and in the text of xcii. 3, 'with *higgaion* upon the harp.' It denotes apparently an instrumental interlude of some kind. The word has the sense of *meditation* in xix. 14, and according to the usage of the cognate verb, which denotes the growling of a lion (Is. xxxi. 4), the moaning of a dove (Is. xxxviii. 14; lix. 11), or of a mourner (Is. xvi. 7), it should mean *murmuring, meditative music*, rather than *resounding music*.

Two terms refer to *musical instruments*.

On Negīnōth[1]: rather, **with music of stringed instruments**: occurs six times in the Psalter[2]: and in Hab. iii. 19 we find *on my stringed instruments*. **Upon Neginah**: rather, **with music of a stringed instrument** (lxi): may be a variation of the expression, or may indicate the melody to which the Psalm was to be sung[3]. The word is derived from a verb meaning *to play on stringed instruments* (1 Sam. xvi. 16—18, 23). It occurs elsewhere in the sense of *music* or *song* (Job xxx. 9; Ps. lxxvii. 6; Is. xxxviii. 20; Lam. v. 14). The title no doubt indicates that the Psalm was to be accompanied by stringed instruments, perhaps by these only.

Upon Nehilōth[4]: R.V. **with the Nehiloth**, or (marg.) *wind*

[1] בְּנְגִינוֹת: LXX ἐν ψαλμοῖς (iv): ἐν ὕμνοις generally: in Hab. ἐν τῇ ᾠδῇ αὐτοῦ: Vulg. *in carminibus*: Jer. *in psalmis*: Symm. διὰ ψαλτηρίων.

[2] Pss. iv, vi, liv, lv, lxvii, lxxvi.

[3] The Heb. is עַל נְגִינַת, which may mean *set to neginath*, or, *the song of...*: some word of definition being lost.

[4] אֶל הַנְּחִילוֹת. The Greek and Latin versions are quite astray,

instruments: in Ps. v only. Possibly *flutes* of some kind are meant. For the use of these in sacred music see Is. xxx. 29 (*a pipe*): 1 Sam. x. 5; 1 Kings i. 40; and on their use in the services of the Second Temple see Edersheim, *The Temple and its Services*, p. 55. It is not however the usual word for *flute*.

Two terms probably indicate the *character* or *pitch* of the music.

Upon Alāmōth[1]: R.V. **set to A.**: is found in the title of Ps. xlvi, and may possibly once have stood in the title of Ps. ix, and either as a subscription to Ps. xlviii, or in the title of Ps. xlix. See the notes there. The term appears to mean *in the manner of maidens*, or, *for maidens' voices: soprano.*

Upon Shemīnīth[2]: R.V. **set to the S.**, i.e. as marg., *the eighth* (Pss. vi and xii): probably denotes that the setting was to be an octave lower, or, on the lower octave: *tenor* or *bass.* Both terms occur together in 1 Chr. xv. 19—21. Heman, Asaph, and Jeduthun were appointed "with cymbals of brass to sound aloud": eight other Levites, "with psalteries set to Alamoth"; and six "with harps set to the Sheminith, to lead."

Upon Gittith[3]: R.V. **set to the Gittith**: occurs in the titles of Pss. viii, lxxxi, lxxxiv. In form *Gittith* is a fem. adj. derived from *Gath*, and may mean either (1) some Gittite instrument: so the Targ.; 'the harp which David brought from Gath': or

referring the word to the contents of the Psalm. The LXX and Theodotion: *ὑπὲρ τῆς κληρονομούσης*: Vulg. *pro ea quae hereditatem consequitur*: Aq. *ἀπὸ* (?) *κληροδοσιῶν*: Symm. *ὑπὲρ κληρουχιῶν*: Jer. *super hereditatibus*: all connect the word with the root נחל, *to inherit.*

[1] עַל עַלְמוֹת. The ancient Versions are again at fault. The LXX renders: *ὑπὲρ τῶν κρυφίων*: Vulg. *pro occultis*: Symm. *ὑπὲρ τῶν αἰωνίων*: Aq. *ἐπὶ νεανιοτήτων*: and so Jer. *pro iuventutibus.*

[2] עַל הַשְּׁמִינִית. The LXX literally *ὑπὲρ τῆς ὀγδόης*: Vulg. *pro octava.* Both terms are allegorically explained by the Fathers, of the mysteries of the faith, the octave of eternity, &c. &c.

[3] עַל הַגִּתִּית. The LXX and Symm. have *ὑπὲρ τῶν ληνῶν*: Vulg. and Jer. *pro torcularibus*, 'for the wine-presses,' reading גִּתּוֹת for גִּתִּית. Hence some have explained the title, 'set to the melody of a vintage song.' Aq. and Theod. render the Massoretic text in Ps. viii: *ὑπὲρ τῆς γεθθίτιδος*, but according to the Syro-hexaplar version Aq. had *ἐπὶ τοῦ ληνοῦ* or *ἐπὶ τῶν ληνῶν* in lxxxi and lxxxiv.

(2) a Gittite melody; possibly, as has been conjectured, the march of the Gittite guard (2 Sam. xv. 18).

The rendering of the LXX, Symm., and Jer. *For* or *over the winepresses* may however preserve the true reading, indicating that these Psalms were sung at the Feast of Tabernacles or Ingathering at the end of the vintage. Ps. lxxxi appears to have been specially intended for that festival; and Ps. lxxxiv is virtually a 'Psalm of going up,' for the use of pilgrims to the three great feasts.

To Jeduthun[1]: R.V. **after the manner of J.** (lxii, lxxvii): probably means that the Psalm was set to some melody composed by or called after David's chief musician (1 Chr. xvi. 41). In the title of Ps. xxxix Jeduthun appears to be named as the chief musician intended.

A series of obscure titles probably indicate the *melody* to which the Psalm was to be sung by a reference to the opening words of some well-known song[2]. Such are the titles of

Ps. ix: **set to Muth-labben** (R.V.), meaning possibly *Die for the son*[3].

Ps. xxii: **set to Ayyéleth hash-shachar**, i.e. *the hind of the morning*.

Pss. xlv, lxix: **set to Shoshannim** (R.V.), i.e. *Lilies*. Ps. lx: **set to Shushan Eduth** (R.V.), i.e. *The lily of testimony*. Ps. lxxx: **set to Shoshannim Eduth** (R.V.), i.e. *Lilies, a testimony*. All these titles probably denote the melody to which the Psalm was to be sung, not the subject of the Psalm or a lily-shaped instrument[4].

[1] עַל יְדוּתוּן.

[2] "Similarly the ancient Syrian hymn writers prefix to their compositions such musical titles as 'To the tune of (*'al qâlâ dh'*) I will open my mouth with knowledge.'" Robertson Smith, *O. T. in Jewish Church*, p. 209.

[3] The LXX has *ὑπὲρ τῶν κρυφίων τοῦ υἱοῦ, concerning the secrets* [i.e. sins, cp. xc. 8] *of the son*, reading the two words *'al-mūth* as one, *'alumōth*. Similarly Aquila read the words as one, *'almūth*, and rendered them *νεανιότητος τοῦ υἱοῦ, of the youth of the son;* and Theod. *ὑπὲρ ἀκμῆς τοῦ υἱοῦ, concerning the maturity of the son.* Cp. above on *Alāmōth*.

[4] The LXX reading the word with different vowels renders *ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀλλοιωθησομένων*, or *τοῖς ἀλλοιωθησομένοις, for those who shall be changed.*

Ps. lvi: **set to Yonath elem rechōkīm**, i.e. *The silent dove of them that are afar off*: or, as read with different vowels, *The dove of the distant terebinths*[1].

Four Psalms (lvii—lix, lxxv) have the title, **[set to] Al-tash-cheth**, i.e. *Destroy not*, possibly the vintage song to which there is an allusion in Is. lxv. 8. See Introd. to Ps. lvii.

The titles of Ps. liii: **set to Mahalath**: and lxxxviii: **set to Mahalath Leannōth**: are extremely obscure, but probably belong to this class[2].

For further details see the notes in each case.

3. A few titles refer to *the liturgical use of the Psalm.* In the time of the Second Temple, each day of the week had its special Psalm, which was sung at the offering of the morning sacrifice[3]. Thus Ps. xcii is entitled "A Psalm, a Song **for the Sabbath day.**" This is the only reference to the daily Psalms in the Heb. text: but in the LXX, Ps. xxiv is assigned to the first day of the week (*τῆς μιᾶς σαββάτων*); Ps. xlviii to the second day (*δευτέρᾳ σαββάτου*); Ps. xciv to the fourth day (*τετράδι σαββάτων*); Ps. xciii to the sixth day of the week (*εἰς τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ προσαββάτου*). The Old Latin Version further refers Ps. lxxxi to the fifth day (*quinta sabbati*). These titles agree with the arrangement given in the Mishna (*Tamid*, vii. 3), according to which the Psalm for the third day was Ps. lxxxii.

The title of Pss. xxxviii and lxx **to bring to remembrance**, or, as R.V. marg., **to make memorial**, may indicate that they were sung at the offering of incense (see Introd. to Ps. xxxviii): and that of Ps. c, **A Psalm of thanksgiving** (R.V.), marg. *for the thank-offering*, may mark that it was sung when thank-offerings (lvi. 12) were offered.

[1] The rendering of the LXX *ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ τοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁγίων μεμακρυμμένου, for the people removed far from the sanctuary*, which at first sight seems hopelessly divergent, is explained by Baethgen as a paraphrase. By *the dove* the translator understood Israel, and for *ēlem* he read *ēlīm*, which he took to mean *gods*. But thinking it unseemly to describe Israel as *the dove of the distant gods*, he substituted a free paraphrase.

[2] The LXX simply transliterates *ὑπὲρ Μαελέθ*. Aq. Symm. Theod. Jer. render *For* or *in the dance*, a curiously inappropriate title for both these Pss.

[3] Cp. Ecclus. l. 14 ff. for a description of the service.

The title of Ps. xxx, **A Song at the Dedication of the House**, may refer to its use at the Festival of the Dedication, instituted by Judas Maccabaeus in B.C. 164, when the Temple was re-dedicated after its profanation by Antiochus (1 Macc. iv. 59; John x. 22).

The title of Ps. xxix in the LXX, ἐξοδίου σκηνῆς (Vulg. *in consummatione tabernaculi*), refers to its use on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles.

To teach is part of the title prefixed to Ps. lx. A comparison of Deut. xxxi. 19 and 2 Sam. i. 18 makes it probable that it was to be learnt by heart and recited on public occasions.

On these titles see further in the notes on the particular Psalms.

A song of Degrees, rather, **A Song of Ascents** (R.V.), or, **for the Goings up**, is the title prefixed to 15 Psalms (cxx—cxxxiv), which appear to have formed a separate collection, bearing the title *The Songs of the Goings up* (or, *of the Going up*), which was afterwards transferred to each separate Psalm.

Various explanations of this title have been proposed.

(1) The LXX renders ᾠδὴ τῶν ἀναβαθμῶν: Vulg. and Jer., *canticum graduum*, 'a song of the steps.' It has been supposed that they were so called because they were sung upon the flight of 15 steps which led from the Court of the Women to the Court of the Men in the Second Temple. But Delitzsch has shewn that the passage of the Talmud quoted in support of this explanation really says nothing at all about the singing of these Psalms upon the steps, or the derivation of the name from them, but merely compares the number of the Psalms with that of the steps.

(2) An explanation which has found considerable favour in modern times regards the term as denoting a particular kind of 'ascending' structure, in which each verse takes up and repeats a word or clause from the preceding verse. Ps. cxxi offers a good example of this structure; but apart from the fact that no trace can be found of this technical meaning of the word '*ascent*' elsewhere, the structure is neither peculiar to these Psalms nor characteristic of all of them.

(3) As 'the ascent' or 'going up' was the regular term for

the Return from Babylon (Ezra vii. 9), some have supposed that these Psalms were sung by the returning exiles on their march. So the Syriac Version, and probably Aq. Symm. and Theod., who render ᾄσμα τῶν ἀναβάσεων or εἰς τὰς ἀναβάσεις. But the contents of many of the Psalms do not favour this explanation.

(4) 'To go up' was the regular term for making pilgrimage to Jerusalem at the great festivals (1 Sam. i. 3; Ps. cxxii. 4). 'The songs of the goings up' may have been the name for the songs which were sung on these occasions. We know that the pilgrims went up with singing (Is. xxx. 29; Ps. xlii. 4), and many of these Psalms are well suited for such occasions[1]; while others, though not so obviously appropriate, might well have been employed for the purpose. This is on the whole the most probable explanation, although the substantive 'going up' is not used elsewhere in this technical sense[2].

4. *Titles relating to Authorship.* These are regularly introduced by a preposition denoting *of* or *belonging to*, *by*, the so-called '*lamed* auctoris.' In some instances, as in Hab. iii. 1, it was no doubt intended to denote authorship; but in others, as will be seen presently (p. xxxiii), it was probably intended to denote *origin*, rather than, in the strict sense of the word, authorship. This is clearly the case with the title *A Psalm of the sons of Korah*, which must mean 'a Psalm from the collection known as that of the sons of K.'; probably also with the title *A Psalm of Asaph*, and, at least in many instances, with the title *A Psalm of David.*

(*a*) One Psalm (xc) bears the name of **Moses.**

(*b*) 73 Psalms bear the name of **David**: viz. all those in Book I, except i and ii, which are prefatory; x, which is part of ix; and xxxiii, which appears to be a later addition: 18 in Book II (li—lxv, lxviii—lxx); one in Book III (lxxxvi); two in Book IV (ci, ciii); 15 in Book V (cviii—cx, cxxii, cxxiv, cxxxi, cxxxiii, cxxxviii—cxlv).

[1] E.g. cxxi—cxxiii, cxxv, cxxvii, cxxviii, cxxxii—cxxxiv.

[2] Unless Wellhausen is right in altering מסלות *highways* to מעלות *goings up*, pilgrimages, in lxxxiv. 5, following the LXX ἀναβάσεις.

(*c*) Two (lxxii, cxxvii) bear the name of **Solomon.**

(*d*) 12 (l, lxxiii—lxxxiii) bear the name of **Asaph,** one of David's principal musicians (1 Chr. vi. 39, xv. 17, xvi. 5 ff.; 2 Chr. v. 12).

(*e*) To **the sons of Korah** are attributed 10 or 11: xlii [xliii], xliv—xlix, lxxxiv, lxxxv, lxxxvii, lxxxviii [?], for according to analogy the title is to be rendered as in R.V., **of the sons of K.**; not, as in A.V., *for the sons of K.*

(*f*) The sages **Heman the Ezrachite** and **Ethan the Ezrachite** (1 Kings iv. 31) have each a psalm attributed to them (lxxxviii, lxxxix).

5. *Titles describing the occasion of the Psalm* are prefixed to 13 Psalms, all of which bear the name of David. Pss. vii, lix. lvi, xxxiv, lii, lvii, cxlii, liv, are referred to the period of his persecution by Saul: Ps. xviii to the climax of his reign; Ps. lx to the Syro-Ammonite war; Ps. li to his fall; Pss. iii and lxiii to his flight from Absalom.

The Value of the Titles. We have now to inquire whether these titles give any authentic information, or must be regarded as additions by editors and compilers, largely, if not wholly, conjectural and untrustworthy.

(i) With regard to the technical *musical terms* of the titles there is little evidence to shew whether they belong entirely to the time of the Second Temple, or in part at least, are of more ancient origin. The title of Habakkuk's prayer, *set to Shigionoth*, and its subscription, *For the Precentor, on my stringed instruments*, would be evidence for the use of such technical terms in pre-exilic times, if we could be sure that they came from the prophet himself and were not later additions. Elsewhere however we meet with terms of this kind only in the Chronicler's description of David's musical services[1], where we read of the use of "psalteries set to Alamoth," and "harps set to the Sheminith, to lead" (1 Chr. xv. 20, 21). The Heb. verb *to lead*, is that of which the word rendered *Chief Musician* or *Precentor*

[1] *Negīnōth* in Is. xxxviii. 20 denotes songs accompanied by stringed instruments, not, as apparently in the Psalm-titles, the music of stringed instruments, or the instruments themselves.

is the participle. As it is found in Chronicles and Ezra only, and not (with the possible exception of Hab. iii. 19) in the pre-exilic literature, it is presumed to be a post-exilic word[1]; and it is inferred that this, and probably the other technical terms, belong to the period of the Return from Babylon. Still it must be remembered that the remains of pre-exilic literature are not of a kind in which the technical terms of the musical ritual of the Temple would be likely to occur.

It is however clear that these titles do not belong to the latest stage of the history of the Psalter. They are almost entirely wanting in Books IV and V, though a large proportion of these Psalms were obviously intended for liturgical use. Moreover though the Septuagint translators found them in their text, they were unable to understand even their general purport. It is possible that a knowledge of the technical terms of Palestinian music had not reached Egypt, but it is more probable that they were obsolete and no longer intelligible at the time when the Greek Version of the Psalter was made.

(ii) The titles referring to the *liturgical use* of Psalms must in some cases at least, if that of Ps. xxx is rightly explained to refer to its use at the Festival of the Dedication, have been added at a late date. Several of them, though agreeing with Jewish tradition, are not found in the Hebrew text.

(iii) It is now generally acknowledged that the titles relating to the *authorship and occasion* of the Psalms cannot be regarded as prefixed by the authors themselves, or as representing trustworthy traditions, and accordingly giving reliable information. The chief reason[2] for this conclusion is that many of them, as

[1] It should however be noted that the cognate substantive occurs in 1 Sam. xv. 29, where Jehovah is styled the *Eminence* or *Glory* of Israel.

[2] The variations in MSS. and Versions are often alleged as a reason for distrusting the titles. The extent of the variations may easily be exaggerated. A few Heb. MSS. assign lxvi, lxvii, to David. In the LXX David's name is prefixed to xxxiii, xliii, lxvii, lxxi (with the curious addition "of the sons of Jonadab and those who were first carried captive"), xci, xciii—xcix, civ, cxxxvii, and it is omitted by the best MSS. in cxxii, cxxiv, cxxxi. Solomon's name is omitted in cxxvii in the best MSS. Historical notices are added to xxvii, lxxvi, lxxx, xciii, xcvi, xcvii, cxliii, cxliv, and liturgical or other notices (some of them

will appear in detail in the commentary, cannot be reconciled with the contents and language of the Psalms to which they are prefixed. Many Psalms which bear the name of David assume situations and circumstances wholly unlike any in which he can be supposed to have been placed, or express feelings which it is difficult to attribute to a man of his position and character: some (e.g. lxix) apparently refer to the captivity: some (e.g. lxxxvi, cxliv) are mere compilations: the language of others (e.g. cxxxix) is unquestionably late. In xx, xxi, cx, a king is the subject, but hardly himself the author. Opinions must differ widely as to the language likely to be used upon a particular occasion, but after every allowance has been made for the difference of modern feeling and for our ignorance of the details of the circumstances of many epochs in David's life, it is in many cases impossible to connect the contents of the Psalms with the occasions named in the titles.

The Psalms of Asaph again cannot all have been written by David's musician Asaph, if indeed any of them were. Some of them refer to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Exile (lxxiv, lxxix, lxxx); some belong apparently to the post-exilic period.

While however the titles cannot be accepted as giving trustworthy information in regard to the authorship of the Psalms, they are not to be regarded as entirely worthless. The infrequency of their occurrence in the later Books (IV, V) is an indication that they were not the arbitrary conjectures of the latest compilers of the Psalter, and it is reasonable to infer that they rested upon some authority, documentary or traditional.

What then is their value? It seems probable that, in many cases at least, they indicate the source from which the Psalms

obscure) to xxiv, xxix, xxxviii, xlviii, xciii, xciv. Jeremiah's name (as well as David's) is prefixed to cxxxvii in some MSS. (not AN), and the names of Haggai and Zechariah or Zechariah only to cxxxviii, cxxxix, cxlvi—cxlviii. Although these additions indicate considerable freedom of treatment in the LXX, it remains that the great majority of the titles in the Hebrew text are attested by the LXX also.

Again it is argued that suspicion is thrown upon the titles by the absence of any names later than the time of David and Solomon. It is no doubt surprising that none of the later Psalmists are mentioned by name, but this fact need not of itself invalidate the titles which are given.

were derived rather than the opinion of the collector as to their authorship.

In regard to the Psalms of the sons of Korah this is clearly the case. The title *A Psalm of the sons of Korah* cannot mean that the Psalm was composed by a plurality of authors. It must be part of the title of the collection from which these Psalms were derived. Such a collection may have been called, "*The Book of the Songs of the sons of Korah*," and have contained Psalms written by members of the guild or family of Korah and preserved in a collection, made probably for liturgical purposes, which bore their name.

Similarly the title *A Psalm of Asaph* may not have been meant to attribute the Psalm to Asaph himself, but may have been intended to indicate that it was taken from a collection preserved and used by the guild or family of Asaph. The collection may have been founded by David's famous musician, though we cannot point to any Psalm in it as even probably written by him, and it still retained the name of its founder, though the main part of it belonged to later times.

In the same way again the title *A Psalm of David* may have been taken over from the general title of the collection from which the Psalm was derived. There appear to have been two 'Davidic' collections: that which forms Book I, and that which was incorporated in the Elohistic collection in Book II. The latter collection may have been called *The Book of the Prayers of David*. Possibly it had some connexion with a historical work, in which the life of David was illustrated by poems, as was often done in the earlier histories: e.g. Judg. v; 1 Sam. ii; 2 Sam. xxii. Now these collections may have been so named from their founder and most eminent poet, although the works of other poets were included in them. Just as in later times the whole Psalter came to be spoken of as the Psalms of David, from its founder and most famous author[1], so in earlier times the smaller collection, of which only the origin and nucleus was due to David, came to bear his name, and when that collection was

[1] We commonly speak of Newman's *Lyra Apostolica*, though five other writers contributed to it.

incorporated in the Psalter, his name was placed at the head of each Psalm taken from it[1].

The case is somewhat different with the Psalms assigned to David in Books IV and V. It is much more probable that some of these titles are due merely to editorial conjecture or inference from the contents. Yet even the compilers of these Books may have found Psalms which are there attributed to David in some earlier collection bearing his name, or assigned to him by current tradition. It is an unwarrantable assumption that all the Davidic Psalms must have been incorporated in earlier collections and inserted in the earlier books.

It is quite possible that imitations of Davidic Psalms, such for example as Ps. lxxxvi, may have been called by his name, without the slightest intention of fraud. In 1 Chr. xvi we find a Psalm compiled from other Psalms suggested as an appropriate thanksgiving for the occasion, though it does not appear to be expressly attributed to David[2].

Again, it is possible that Psalms were written by different poets to illustrate particular episodes in the life of David, or to express the thoughts which might be supposed to have been in his mind upon certain occasions. These "dramatic lyrics" might easily have had his name affixed to them, without the slightest intention of passing them off as his for the sake of giving them currency and authority. To this class of Psalm may belong the Psalm of Moses (xc), which can hardly be supposed to have been actually written by him.

While then the titles of the Psalms cannot be supposed to give certain information as to their authors, and many of the Psalms bearing the name of David cannot have been written by him, we are not justified in rejecting the titles as mere arbitrary conjectures. They supply information concerning the earlier stages of the growth of the Psalter; and it is not unreasonable to inquire whether a Psalm taken from a collection which bore David's name may not have been actually composed by him.

In criticising the title of a Psalm and endeavouring to fix its

[1] So the general title of the collection is prefixed to each of the Pilgrimage Psalms (cxx—cxxxii).

[2] See the R.V. of 1 Chr. xvi. 7.

date by the light of its contents much caution is necessary. The possibility of alterations and additions to the original poem must be taken into account. It is probable that many of the Psalms were not at once committed to writing, but like other oriental poetry, were transmitted orally[1]. The comparison of Ps. xviii with 2 Sam. xxii shews that the text has in some cases suffered from accidental errors of transcription, while in others it appears to bear marks of intentional revision. The comparison of Ps. liii with Ps. xiv, of Ps. lxx with Ps. xl. 13 ff., and of Ps. cviii with Pss. lvii and lx, shews that editors did not scruple to alter earlier Psalms, to divide them, and to combine portions of them, for their own special purposes. The anthem inserted by the chronicler in 1 Chr. xvi is a notable example of a composite Psalm. Additions seem to have been made with a view of adapting Psalms for liturgical use. Such processes, which can be definitely traced in some instances, have no doubt been in operation elsewhere[2].

CHAPTER IV.

THE AUTHORSHIP AND AGE OF THE PSALMS.

It is obvious from what has been said in the preceding chapter that great uncertainty must necessarily rest upon the authorship of the Psalms. When once it is admitted, as it must be admitted, that the titles cannot be absolutely relied on, we are launched upon a sea of uncertainty. Internal evidence, whether of thought, or style, or language, is a precarious guide. Many Psalms are of a quite general character: the circumstances of one period often resemble those of another: many of

[1] Arabic poetry was preserved by the *râwîs*, or *reciters*. "The custom of committing verse to writing did not begin till near the end of the first century after the Flight. The whole of the old poetry was preserved by oral tradition only." Lyall's *Ancient Arabian Poetry*, p. xxxv.

[2] Thus e.g. Pss. xix, xxiv, xxvii, xl, lxxvii, cxliv, have with more or less plausibility been regarded as composite Psalms.

the Psalms have doubtless undergone adaptation and modification, and the date of a Psalm must not always be determined by a single word or phrase[1].

Important as it is for the full interpretation of many Psalms to know the circumstances under which they were written, and for the elucidation of the religious history of Israel to determine the age to which they belong, the Psalms as a whole suffer less from this uncertainty than might be expected. Their interest is human and universal. They appeal to the experience of all ages. Still the endeavour must be made to ascertain to what period of the history a Psalm belongs. The question must be considered with reference to each particular Psalm, or group of Psalms, for in those cases in which Psalms are connected by external indications (e.g. by their titles) or by internal resemblances, they must obviously be considered together. The answer must often be *non liquet*: and even when a Psalm appears to be connected with the circumstances of the life of a particular individual or period, the most that can be said is that the Psalm illustrates, or is illustrated by, that life or that period. Thus it is natural to attribute to Jeremiah[2] several Psalms which reflect feelings expressed in his prophecies, or contain language resembling them; and to assign to the age of Ezra and Nehemiah a number of Psalms which seem to have light thrown upon them by the circumstances recorded in their books. But the historical and biographical records of the O.T., if representative, are only fragmentary and partial. Jeremiah was but one of many persecuted saints and prophets. History repeats itself, and circumstances not unlike those described in Ezra and Nehemiah must have recurred in the later period of

[1] The question is often asked by the English reader why language does not determine the date of the books of the O.T. within at any rate comparatively definite limits. But (1) the remains of Hebrew literature of which the date is admitted as certain are too scanty to give much material for forming a judgement: (2) the Massoretic vocalisation, while here and there preserving ancient forms, has obscured distinctions under the uniform pronunciation of a later age: (3) the possibility of the imitation of ancient models in a later age must be taken into account.

[2] See the introductions to Pss. xxii, xxxi, xxxv, xxxviii, xl, lv, lxix, lxxi, lxxxviii.

which we know practically nothing. Many Psalms of course contain no indications whatever of their date. But a Psalm gains in point and reality if we can give it a historical or personal background, though it is unreasonable to assert dogmatically that it must necessarily have been composed by that particular author or under those special circumstances.

We have seen (p. xxxiii) that the titles 'A Psalm of David,' 'A Psalm of Asaph,' 'A Psalm of the sons of Korah' probably indicate the collections from which the Psalms bearing them were derived. But they easily came to be regarded as giving authoritative information about the authorship of the Psalms to which they are prefixed. The view was frequently held in the Jewish Church and was adopted by some of the Christian Fathers, that anonymous Psalms were to be attributed to the poet last named[1]; but in process of time the whole Psalter came to be attributed to David[2].

Modern criticism has gone to the opposite extreme, and is disposed to refer the whole Psalter, or at least the greater part of it, to the period after the return from Babylon. Thus Wellhausen (in Bleek's *Introduction*, p. 507, ed. 1876): "Since the Psalter belongs to the Hagiographa, and is the hymn-book of the congregation of the Second Temple...the question is not whether it contains any post-exilic Psalms, but whether it contains any pre-exilic Psalms." Similarly Reuss (*History of the O.T.* § 282): "Our doubts do not go so far as to deny the possibility of referring a single one of the poems in the present collection of Synagogue hymns to the period of the kingdom. But we have no decisive proofs for such antiquity." In this country Professor Cheyne in his Bampton Lectures for 1889, on *The Origin and Religious Contents of the Psalter in the Light*

[1] So Jerome (Ep. cxl, *ad Cyprianum*) attributes Pss. xci to c to Moses, "hanc habente Scriptura sacra consuetudinem, ut omnes Psalmi qui cuius sint titulos non habent his deputentur quorum in prioribus Psalmis nomina continentur."

[2] So R. Meir in the Talmud *Pesachim* 117 *a*; and this view seemed to St Augustine "the more credible" (*de Civ. Dei* xvii. 14). Theodoret accepted it as the general opinion. Even Theodore of Mopsuestia, when he explained seventeen Psalms to refer to the Maccabaean age, did not question that they were written by David, but supposed that he had foretold the future fortunes of his people.

of Old Testament Criticism and the History of Religions, has maintained that the whole Psalter, with the possible exception of parts of Ps. xviii, is post-exilic, belonging mainly to the later Persian and Greek period, and containing a considerable number of Maccabaean Psalms; and that it was finally edited by Simon the Maccabee, c. B.C. 140. Duhm (1900) goes even further, and not only denies that there is a single Psalm which could induce an unprejudiced critic to regard it as pre-exilic, but thinks that it is open to question whether any Psalms are as old as the Persian period, and assigns the majority of them to the century beginning with the Maccabaean troubles and ending with the death of Alexander Jannaeus, B.C. 170—78. The completion and final publication of the Psalter took place, he holds, about B.C. 70.

It is however difficult to believe that these views represent a just estimate of the evidence. Religious poetry certainly existed before the exile. Ps. cxxxvii[1] furnishes explicit evidence that the Israelites carried it with them to Babylon, and that their musical skill was famous there. The 'songs of Zion' which their conquerors bade them sing were 'Jehovah's songs,' sacred songs destined for use in His worship.

The ancient praise-songs of Israel in the Temple are referred to by the prophet of the Exile: "our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is burned with fire" (Is. lxiv. 11).

The Book of Lamentations, which, though probably not written by Jeremiah, "betrays in almost every part so lively a recollection of the closing period of the siege and taking of Jerusalem, that at least the greater portion of it can have been written by no one who was not an eye-witness or a younger contemporary of these events[2]," is so thoroughly artificial in style

[1] Professor Cheyne indeed gets rid of the evidence of Ps. cxxxvii by treating it as a "dramatic lyric" written 400 years after the Return in the time of Simon, and therefore not trustworthy evidence (*Origin of the Psalter*, p. 69 f.); but if any Psalm bears upon the face of it clear indications of the time at which it was composed, it is this Psalm. The writer and those for whom he speaks are still smarting under the recollection of the sufferings of the Exile.

[2] Kautzsch, *Literature of the O.T.*, E.T., p. 92.

and form that it may justly be inferred from it that the art of writing sacred poetry had long been cultivated.

Jeremiah (xxxiii. 11) predicts the restoration of the Temple services of thanksgiving[1], and quotes as in familiar use a doxology otherwise known only from post-exilic Psalms (cvi. 1, &c.), yet in a form which, by its slight differences from that in the Psalter, shews that it belongs to the prophetic period. "Yet again shall there be heard in this place...the voice of them that say, 'Give thanks to Jehovah of hosts, for Jehovah is good, for His lovingkindness endureth for ever,' as they bring (sacrifices of) thanksgiving into the house of Jehovah." It is moreover evident from passages such as Jer. xx. 7 ff. that he was familiar with the style and language of Psalms resembling those which have come down to us, even if it cannot be proved that he is actually quoting any of them.

A century earlier Isaiah refers to the joyous songs of the Passover festival, and the music with which pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the festival was accompanied (Is. xxx. 29).

Amos (v. 23; cp. viii. 10) alludes to the songs and music of the religious festivals in the Northern kingdom.

The Song of Deborah (Judg. v) is generally acknowledged to be contemporary with the events which it describes, and though it appears to have undergone some expansion, or modification of form, at a later age, the greater part of the Song of Moses in Ex. xv is probably Mosaic[2]; and both of these poems are penetrated by a religious spirit.

Religious poetry existed before the Exile, and there is no *a priori* improbability that the Psalter should contain pre-exilic Psalms. And when we examine the Psalter, we find a number of Psalms which may most naturally be referred to the pre-exilic period.

[1] The reference to the singers' chambers in the Temple in Ezek. xl. 44 cannot be quoted as implying the existence of a Temple choir in Ezekiel's time. The context requires the adoption of the reading of the LXX, *two* (שְׁתַּיִם) for *singers* (שָׁרִים). On the other hand the existence of such a choir is implied by the statement in Ezra ii. 41 (=Neh. vii. 44) that among those who returned from Babylon in B.C. 536 were "the singers, the sons of Asaph."

[2] Driver, *Lit. of O.T.*[6], p. 30.

(*a*) Psalms which contain a definite reference to the king, viz. ii, xviii, xx, xxi, xxviii, xxxiii, xlv, lxi, lxiii, lxxii, ci, cx, presumably belong to the period of the monarchy. The reference of such Psalms as xx, xxi, lxi, lxiii to Judas or Simon, who studiously avoided the title of king, has to be supported by arbitrary and fanciful exegesis, and by setting aside the ordinary meaning of familiar words. That Pss. xlv and lxxii can refer to a non-Israelite king such as Ptolemy Philadelphus is incredible. 'Jehovah's anointed' in xxviii. 8 cannot, in view of the context, be understood of anyone but the king. The reference to a king in xxxiii. 16, 17 might be quite general, but the omission of any reference to a king in cxlvii, which is clearly based upon it, is significant. The one belongs to the age of the monarchy, the other does not.

(*b*) Pss. xlvi—xlviii, lxxv, lxxvi may far more naturally be referred to the deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrians under Sennacherib in B.C. 701 than "at the earliest, to one of the happier parts of the Persian age." They are full of points of contact in thought and expression with the Assyrian prophecies of Isaiah. "The Jewish Church in Isaiah's time was," it is argued, "far too germinal to have sung these expressions of daring monotheism and impassioned love of the temple; and the word *'Elyōn* (xlvi. 5; cp. xlvii. 3) as a title for Jehovah never occurs in Isaiah, but frequently in the (probably) later Psalms[1]." It may well be the case that these Psalms soar far above the average belief of the Israelites of the time, but that is no argument against their having been composed by Isaiah or a poet fired with Isaiah's insight and enthusiasm. They contain nothing in advance of Isaiah's theology; and it should be noted that it is not "impassioned love of the temple" which inspires the writer of xlvi and xlviii, but admiring love for the city, which had been so signally delivered; and the motive of these Psalms is in full accord with Isaiah's teaching concerning the inviolability of Zion. The argument from the use of *'Elyōn* in Ps. xlvi loses its force when it is observed that it is a poetical word, never used of Jehovah by any of the prophets (see Appendix, Note ii).

[1] Cheyne, *Origin of the Psalter*, p. 164.

An argument from quotations seldom has much weight, for it is often impossible to decide which of two parallel passages is the original, but it seems clear that Lam. ii. 15 combines Ps. xlviii. 2 and Ps. l. 2, and if so, the quotation supports the pre-exilic date of these Psalms.

(*c*) Ps. l reflects most forcibly the teaching of the great prophetic period, the eighth century, and must be referred to this rather than to any later age.

These are some of the most prominent examples of Psalms which are most naturally and simply assigned to the period of the monarchy; but there are others which may with great probability be referred to the same period, and of those which contain no clear indications of date some at least may be pre-exilic.

But the question still remains to be asked, Can we go further, and carry the origin of the Psalter back to David? It is difficult to believe that the tradition of the Jewish Church was entirely wrong in regarding him as the most eminent religious poet of the nation, and in assigning the foundation of the Psalter to him. That he was a gifted poet is proved by his noble elegy over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. i. 19 ff.) and his lament for Abner (2 Sam. iii. 33 f.). Though these poems are not directly religious, they shew that the warrior king was capable of the tenderest feelings. Can these have been the only products of his poetical genius? How came it that David was regarded as "the sweet Psalmist of Israel," and that so many Psalms were ascribed to him or at any rate that the earliest collections of Psalms were called by his name, unless he was really a Psalmist, and some at least of these Psalms were actually written by him[1]?

His skill as poet and musician, and his interest in the development of religious music, are attested by the earliest records[2]. Later times pointed to him as the founder of the services of the sanctuary[3]. The leaders of the Return

[1] Comp. Riehm, *Einleitung in das A. T.*, ii. 190.

[2] See 1 Sam. xvi. 17 ff.; xviii. 10; 2 Sam. i. 17 ff.; iii. 33 ff.; vi. 5, 15; xxii. 1; xxiii. 1 ff.; Amos vi. 5.

[3] 2 Chr. xxix. 30.

from the Exile believed themselves to be restoring his institutions[1].

But in particular, the incorporation of Ps. xviii in the Book of Samuel as a specimen of David's poetry illustrating his character and genius is evidence in favour of regarding David as the founder of the Psalter, which cannot lightly be set aside. That Psalm is there circumstantially ascribed to David, and there is no sufficient ground for placing the compilation of the Book of Samuel at so late a date that its evidence on this point can be disregarded as a mere tradition which had sprung up in the course of centuries.

But if Ps. xviii must be acknowledged to be the work of David, important consequences follow. For depth of devotion, simplicity of trust, joyousness of gratitude, and confidence of hope, not less than for its natural force and poetic beauty, that Psalm has few rivals. It has all the freshness of creative genius. It can hardly have been the solitary production of its author. If such a Psalm could have been written by David, so might many others; and it is reasonable to inquire with regard to those which bear his name whether they may not actually have been composed by him.

Both poetry and music existed before David's time, and poetry had been carried to a high development in such compositions as Ex. xv and Judg. v. But with David a new era of religious poetry commenced. The personal element entered into it. It became the instrument of the soul's communion with God. David's natural poetic powers were awakened by his training in the schools of the prophets under Samuel[2]. The manifold vicissitudes of his life gave him an unparalleled depth and variety of experience. Chosen by God to be the founder of the kingdom of promise, he must still pass through trials and persecutions and dangers to the throne. When he had reached the zenith of his fame, he fell through pride and self-reliance, and by sharp chastisement must learn the grievousness of sin. But genius and circumstances alone could not have produced the Psalms. In his "last words" he himself declared,

[1] Ezra iii. 10; Neh. xii. 24, 36, 46.
[2] Comp. Delitzsch, *The Psalms*, Introd. § iii.

"The spirit of Jehovah spake in me,
And his word was upon my tongue."

Unique natural genius, trained and called into action by the discipline of an unique life, must still be quickened and illuminated by the supernal inspiration of the Holy Spirit, before it could strike out the strains, which were to be the pattern and model of religious poetry for all the ages.

It has often been asserted that the David of the Psalms is an entirely different character from the David of history. The devout singer and the rough warrior cannot, it is said[1], be the same person. But a great nature is necessarily many sided; and in early ages it is possible that traits of character which to us seem irreconcilable may coexist in the same individual[2]. And the difference is often exaggerated. Not a few of the Psalms illustrate and are illustrated by the history of David's life; and in that history, fragmentary and incomplete as it necessarily is, are to be found abundant traces of the religious side of his character; of the confidence which in the midst of danger and difficulty threw itself unperplexed upon God; of the patience which could await God's time instead of rushing to revenge; of the simple faith which ascribed all success and advancement to God; of the hope which looked trustingly forward into the unknown future, in calm assurance that God would fulfil His promises; last but not least, of the penitence which humbled itself in unfeigned sorrow for sin.

It may have been the case, as Delitzsch supposes[3], that the

[1] e.g. by Reuss, *Hist. of O. T.* § 157; Cheyne, *Origin of the Psalter*, p. 211.

[2] The character of Charles the Great presents an interesting parallel. Charles was "a conqueror, a legislator, a founder of social order, a restorer of religion." Yet "his wars were ferocious, and his policy after conquest unsparing." Though there was much of earnestness and intelligence in his religion, "it was not complete or deep enough to exclude that waywardness and inconsistency of moral principle, and that incapacity to control passion, which belonged to the time....His court was full of the gross licentiousness of the period, and he was not superior to it himself." Church, *Beginning of the Middle Ages*, pp. 135 ff. Comp. Bishop Alexander's *Witness of the Psalms to Christ*, p. 89; Davison's *Praises of Israel*, p. 45.

[3] Introd. § iii.

reigns of Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah were marked by fresh outbursts of Psalm poetry. Under both these kings great national deliverances called for fresh expressions of praise and thanksgiving (2 Ch. xx; 2 Kings xviii. ff.): Jehoshaphat exerted himself for the religious education of the country (2 Chr. xvii. 7 ff.): the collection of Proverbs, made under the direction of Hezekiah, attests his interest in literature (Prov. xxv. 1).

A few Psalms date from the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and the earlier years of the exile. Some (cp. p. xxxvi) may be from the pen of Jeremiah, who has been credited by some critics with the authorship of a considerable number[1].

With the Return from the Exile Psalmody revived. The harp which had been hung up on the willows of Babylon was strung once more. Fresh hymns were written for the services of the restored Temple[2]. Psalms xciii, xcv—c, the lyrical echo of Is. xl—lxvi, form a noble group of anthems composed in all probability for the Dedication of the Temple in B.C. 516. Other Psalms may reflect the circumstances of the age of Ezra and Nehemiah, and the renewed study of the Law in that period bore fruit in the devout meditations of Ps. cxix.

How long did the Psalter still continue to receive further enrichment? The question has been warmly debated in ancient and modern times, whether any of the Psalms belong to the Maccabaean period. Prophecy was silent (1 Macc. iv. 46, &c.); but must not the great revival of national spirit naturally have found expression in poetry? and do not some of the Psalms clearly refer to the circumstances of that period?

Some critics, as has been mentioned already (p. xxxvii), would

[1] This appears to be due partly to the fact that so much of his personal and inner life is known to us from his autobiography; partly to his familiarity with existing literature and his free use of it, which results in numerous parallels between his prophecies and the Psalms.

[2] Yet some of the Temple Psalms in the later books of the Psalter may have been revivals or adaptations of ancient hymns. An incidental reference in Jer. xxxiii. 11 shews that the doxology, "Give thanks to Jehovah of hosts, for Jehovah is good, for his mercy endureth for ever," was the characteristic formula of thanksgiving before the Captivity. Yet it is found only in the later Books (IV and V) of the Psalter (Ps. c. 4, 5; cvi. 1; &c.), in Psalms which are certainly post-exilic.

refer a considerable number of Psalms, or even the main bulk of the Psalter, to that period, and would bring down the completion of the collection to the reign of John Hyrcanus (B.C. 135—106) or Alexander Jannaeus (B.C. 105—78).

The real question is, however, a much narrower one. The Psalms which have been most confidently and generally referred to the age of the Maccabees are xliv, lxxiv, lxxix, and lx, lxxxiii; with a few others. These are thought to present features which belong to that age, and to no other; e.g. in Ps. xliv the description of the nation as suffering, though it has been faithful to God; in lxxiv the destruction of the synagogues, the profanation of the Temple, and the cessation of prophecy: while the quotation of lxxix. 2, 3 in 1 Macc. vii. 16, 17 with reference to the slaughter of the Assideans by the usurping high-priest Alcimus, is supposed to imply that it was written on the occasion of the massacre.

The question is one of exegesis, and a detailed examination of the characteristics of these Psalms must be deferred to the commentary on them. It will then be seen whether they cannot be better referred to the Chaldean or Persian period, or even an earlier time. It has well been pointed out that some distinctive features of the Maccabaean period are conspicuously absent from these Psalms. "They do not contain the slightest trace of those internal divisions of the people which were the most marked features of the Maccabaean struggle. The dangers then were as much from within as from without; and party jealousies brought the divine cause to the greatest peril. It is incredible that a series of Maccabaean Psalms should contain no allusion to a system of enforced idolatry, or to a temporising priesthood, or to a faithless multitude[1]."

The preliminary question may however be discussed here, whether the history of the Psalter and the Canon does not exclude the possibility of such late additions.

(1) As the author of the Book of Chronicles (c. 300 B.C.), in combining portions of Pss. cv, xcvi, cvi for the festal anthem which he introduces on the occasion of the translation of the Ark to

[1] Bp Westcott in Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, ii. 168.

Zion (1 Chr. xvi. 8 ff.), includes as a part of cvi the doxology which marks the end of the fourth Book, it has been argued that the Psalter must have been already known to him in its five-fold division. This is extremely doubtful. This doxology, as will be shewn in the notes to Ps. cvi, differs in character from the doxologies at the close of the first three Books; in all probability it was an original part of the Psalm, not an addition by the collector of the Psalter, and only came in later times to be regarded as marking the division between the fourth and fifth Books. And even if it were to be admitted that a five-fold division of the Psalter then existed, it would not necessarily follow that the Psalter was finally complete, and closed against the admission of fresh Psalms.

(2) More important is the fact that the Psalms which upon internal grounds have most generally and confidently been assigned to the Maccabaean period (xliv, lx, lxxiv, lxxix, lxxxiii) are all found in the 'Elohistic' collection. This collection was certainly earlier than the collection contained in Books IV and V, for Ps. cviii consists of portions of two Elohistic Psalms (see p. lv). Moreover some of the supposed Maccabaean Psalms have musical titles, in contrast to the general practice of the last collection. It is exceedingly improbable that a Maccabaean Psalmist would have made his additions Elohistic to correspond with the earlier Psalms, and even furnished his Psalms with titles which no longer had any meaning[1]. And is it conceivable that the LXX translators should have been so entirely at fault as to the meaning of the titles of lx and lxxx, if they were quite recent compositions?

(3) The Greek translator of Ecclesiasticus, writing in Egypt, about B.C. 130, states in his Prologue that his grandfather Jesus the son of Sirach was moved to write the book after diligent study of "the law and the prophets and the other books of our fathers" (*τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων πατρίων βιβλίων*); and pleading for indulgence towards the defects of his own translation he points out that even in the case of "the law

[1] See Robertson Smith, *Old Test. in Jewish Church*[2], pp. 207, 437.

and the prophecies and the rest of the books" there is no small difference between the original and a translation.

From these statements it may reasonably be inferred (1) that Jesus the son of Sirach, c. 180 B.C., was acquainted with a three-fold Canon of Scripture, distinguished from other writings; and (2) that a Greek translation of a three-fold Canon was current in Egypt c. 130 B.C. Now "the Greek Psalter...is essentially the same as the Hebrew; there is nothing to suggest that the Greek was first translated from a less complete Psalter and afterwards extended to agree with the received Hebrew. It is therefore reasonable to hold that the Hebrew Psalter was completed and recognised as an authoritative collection long enough before 130 B.C. to allow of its passing to the Hellenistic Jews of Alexandria[1]." Accordingly the closing of the Canon of the Psalter must be placed, at the very latest, in the time of Simon (c. 140 B.C.). John Hyrcanus (B.C. 135—106), Aristobulus I, who assumed the title of king (B.C. 106), and Alexander Jannaeus (B.C. 105—78), are not celebrated in the Psalter. But it seems very doubtful whether a considerably longer interval than ten years ought not to be allowed between the closing of the collection and its currency in a Greek Version; and the evidence next to be adduced makes it extremely probable that the collection was completed at least half a century earlier.

(4) Fresh evidence as to the contents of the Canon of Scripture known to Jesus the son of Sirach has recently been brought to light by the recovery of portions of the Hebrew text of Ecclesiasticus by Dr Schechter and other scholars. In this text ch. li. 12 is followed by a Psalm of fifteen verses, which is unquestionably an imitation of Ps. cxxxv (see Introd. to that Ps.), and is largely composed of phrases taken from Psalms in Book V, e.g. cxxi, cxxxii, cxlvii, cxlviii. In particular, cxlviii. 14 is quoted *verbatim*. If this Psalm was composed by Jesus the son of Sirach c. 180 B.C., it shews that he was familiar with Psalms, some of which have a strong claim to be regarded as among the latest in the Psalter. This is the most striking example, but Dr Schechter holds that the allusions in the

[1] Robertson Smith, *O. T. J. C.* p. 201.

portions of the Hebrew text at present recovered extend over "all the books or groups of the Psalms[1]." Though it is impossible to prove that the Psalter was finally completed by B.C. 180, a strong presumption is raised against the admission of Psalms after that date, and it is highly probable that among "the other books of the fathers" upon the study of which Jesus the son of Sirach based his work was the Psalter substantially as we now have it. In particular it is noteworthy that we have clear evidence for the existence of the last group of Psalms (cxliv—cl), in which Maccabaean Psalms might most naturally be looked for, and one of which (cxlix) has upon internal grounds the best claim of any Psalm to be regarded as Maccabaean.

(5) The Second Book of Maccabees speaks of the care which Judas took to collect the sacred writings which had been dispersed or lost in the war (2 Macc. ii. 14), but no hint is given that the collection included new works. This book however cannot be regarded as a trustworthy historical authority.

(6) If the *Psalms of Solomon*[2] could be referred to the Maccabaean age, they would afford an almost conclusive proof that the whole of the Psalter belongs to a much earlier time. But it is now generally agreed that this collection belongs to the period after the conquest of Jerusalem by Pompey in B.C. 63, and was completed soon after his death in B.C. 48[3]. Even if the Psalms of Solomon are to be placed at this later date, the argument does not altogether lose its force[4]. For they were written only a century after the standard of independence was raised by

[1] Schechter and Taylor, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, p. 26. "The impression produced by the perusal of Ben Sira's original on the student who is at all familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures is that of reading the work of a post-canonical author, who already knew his Bible and was constantly quoting it."

[2] A collection of 18 Psalms, written in Hebrew, probably in Palestine, but now extant only in a Greek version. The best edition is that of Prof. (now Bp) Ryle and Dr James, with translation and commentary (1891). The text is to be found in Vol. iii of Dr Swete's edition of the LXX (also published separately, with the Greek fragments of Enoch).

[3] See Schürer's *Hist. of the Jewish People in the time of Jesus Christ*, Div. ii. § 32 (Vol. iii. pp. 17 ff., E.T.).

[4] The development of this argument by Bp Westcott in Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, ii. 168, on the hypothesis of the Maccabaean date of these Psalms, should still be consulted.

Mattathias, and almost immediately after the time at which the Psalter is supposed by some critics to have received its latest additions. But the contrast is immense. They are separated from the Psalter by an impassable gulf. "The spirit which the Psalms breathe is entirely that of Pharisaic Judaism. They are pervaded by an earnest moral tone and a sincere piety. But the righteousness which they preach and the dearth of which they deplore is, all through, the righteousness which consists in complying with all the Pharisaic prescriptions[1]." Their development of the doctrine of the Resurrection and the Messianic expectation separates them widely from the canonical Psalms. Where for example can we find parallels in the Psalter to language like the following with reference to the Resurrection?

"The destruction of the sinner shall be for ever,
and he shall not be remembered, when He visiteth the righteous:
this is the portion of sinners for ever.
But they that fear the Lord shall arise unto life eternal,
and their life shall be in the light of the Lord, and shall fail no more" (iii. 13—16).

"For the Lord will spare His saints,
and their transgressions will He blot out by correction:
for the life of the righteous is for ever,
but sinners shall be carried away to destruction,
and the memorial of them shall no more be found" (xiii. 9, 10).

Equally remarkable is the expression of the Messianic hope:

"Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them their king, the son of David,
at the time which Thou knowest, O God,
that he may reign over Israel Thy servant.
And gird him with strength to break in pieces unrighteous rulers" (xvii. 23, 24).

* * * *

[1] Schürer, p. 21.

"And in his days there is no unrighteousness in the midst of them,
for all are holy, and their king is the anointed lord[1]" (*v.* 36).

* * * *

"And he himself is pure from sin, to rule over a great people;
to rebuke rulers and to destroy sinners by the strength of his word.
And he shall not be feeble in his days, relying upon his God,
for God made him mighty in the holy spirit,
and wise in the counsel of understanding, with strength and righteousness" (*vv.* 41, 42).

These general considerations are sufficient, taken all together, to make it antecedently doubtful whether any Psalms date from the Maccabaean period, and it seems to be fairly open to question whether the internal characteristics of the supposed Maccabaean Psalms are such as to outweigh these general considerations. The discussion of these special characteristics must necessarily be deferred to the notes on each Psalm. Few modern commentators however deny the possibility, and most maintain the certainty, of the existence of Maccabaean Psalms in the Psalter.

CHAPTER V.

THE OBJECT, COLLECTION, AND GROWTH OF THE PSALTER.

WHAT was the object with which the Psalter was compiled? It is often spoken of as 'the hymn book of the second Temple,' and it is assumed that it was intended for use in public worship. But it has not the appearance of a collection of hymns made exclusively for liturgical purposes, and there is no evidence that it was so used as a whole in the Jewish Church down to the Christian era[2]. Many of the Psalms were no doubt written

[1] χριστὸς κύριος: cp. Lam. iv. 20 (LXX), Luke ii. 11.

[2] "The statements of the Rabbis point to the use of certain Psalms on special occasions only; for the use of the whole Psalter in the period to which they refer there is no evidence." Dalman in *Theol. Litztg.* 1893, col. 517.

expressly for use in public worship, either in celebration of particular events, or for general use; and many not written with this special object are well adapted for it. But many were clearly not originally intended for this purpose, and could only be so used by a process of accommodation. Some Psalms are the outpouring of the heart to God in the most intimate personal communion, in supplication, confession, thanksgiving, praise, springing out of the needs and aspirations of the soul in the crises of life, and adapted primarily for private devotion rather than for public worship. Some are of a didactic character, intended for instruction and edification, and to be read or learnt rather than sung. The object of the compilers of the Psalter would seem to have been by no means simply liturgical, but partly to unite and preserve existing collections of religious poetry, partly to provide a book of religious devotion, public and private.

In this connexion a few words may be said upon a question which has recently been much discussed:—Who is the speaker in the Psalms? At first sight it may seem to the reader accustomed to modern western modes of thought that it can be no one but the Psalmist himself. But in view of the ancient oriental modes of thought and expression it is at least possible that in many Psalms which seem at first sight to be entirely personal and individual, the speaker is not an individual, but the nation or the godly part of it, the collective 'servant of Jehovah.' Thus in Ps. cxxix Israel speaks as an individual: "Much have they vexed me from my youth up, let Israel now say." Such personification of the nation is not confined to poetry: it is common in the Pentateuch. Israel often speaks or is addressed as an individual, e.g. in Deut. vii. 17 ff.; Ex. xxiii. 20 ff.; Num. vi. 24—26. May not this usage be common in the Psalms? and especially if the Psalter be 'the hymn book of the congregation,' is it not the congregation that speaks? This method of interpretation is no novelty. It is found in the LXX and the Targum, in which Psalms apparently most strongly individual (e.g. xxiii, lvi) are interpreted of the nation; it has been adopted by Christian Fathers and Jewish Rabbis and modern commentators of the most widely different schools.

It has been most elaborately developed in recent times by Smend[1], who holds that in few if any of the Psalms is the voice of an individual to be heard. The hostility of enemies so often complained of is really the hostility of neighbouring nations: the sicknesses and sufferings described are those of the body politic (cp. Is. i. 5 ff.). The theory doubtless contains elements of truth; but it has been pressed to absurd extremes, and it is connected with the mistaken view that the Psalter was designed as a whole to be the hymn book of the congregation, and that the Psalms were written for that purpose. Many of the Psalmists were representative men. They spoke on behalf of the nation, or of some class or body within it. Their vivid consciousness of the 'solidarity' of the nation, of the reality and continuity of national life, enabled them to enter into its hopes and fears, its joys and sufferings, its triumphs and reverses, with a depth of insight and an intensity of sympathy which made them truly the mouthpieces of the community. The true poet enlarges and generalises his own feelings and experiences. Thus Tennyson writes of *In Memoriam*: "'I' is not always the author speaking of himself, but the voice of the human race speaking through him[2]." But while the Psalmist speaks in the name of many, he speaks in his own name too. He is not, in the majority of cases at any rate, deliberately substituting the personality of the nation for his own personality. Many Psalms are so intensely personal, that it is impossible to suppose that they did not have their origin in real personal experience; often experience so special and peculiar that it is only by a process of accommodation that it can be used by the congregation. Outside of the Psalter, e.g. in Jeremiah and Nehemiah, language closely resembling that of the Psalter is used by individuals. Moreover the speaker is not seldom distinguished from the congregation. And if the reference of Psalms to the nation is as old as the LXX, the

[1] In the *Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Theologie*, 1888, pp. 49 ff. It has also been fully examined and advocated within more reasonable limits by Beer, *Individual- und Gemeindepsalmen*, 1894. See also Cheyne, *Origin of the Psalter*, pp. 261 ff., 276 ff. Robertson Smith, *O. T. J. C.* p. 220. Driver, *Lit. of O.T.*[6] p. 389.

[2] Tennyson's *Life*, i. 305.

reference of them to individuals is still older, for it is implied by the titles, which connect them with events in the life of David. Still, the possibility that the 'I' in the Psalter is collective and not individual must be borne in mind in the interpretation of the Psalms, though to what extent the principle is to be applied will remain debatable. In many Psalms where 'I' and 'we' interchange it may be questioned whether 'I' denotes the nation, or the Psalmist speaking on its behalf as its leader and representative. See e.g. xliv. 4, 6, 15; lx. 9; lxv. 3; lxvi. 13 ff.; lxxiv. 12; lxxxix. 50; xciv. 16 ff.; ciii; cxviii. Some Psalms where the singular alone is used may be national; but to the present writer it seems exceedingly questionable whether such Psalms as li, lvi, lxxi, lxxxviii, cii, cxvi, cxxxix, can be other than personal in their origin and primary application, though they may in use have been appropriated by the whole congregation.

Internal evidence makes it certain that the Psalter grew up gradually from the union of earlier collections of Psalms, and these collections differed widely in character. In some the personal element predominated; in others there were more Psalms referring primarily to events in the national history; in others the liturgical intention is obvious.

The various strata of which the Psalter is composed can to some extent be distinguished. Three principal divisions, marked by well-defined characteristics, may be observed. They appear to have arisen in successive chronological order[1], but such a supposition need not exclude the possibility that the first division received late additions, or that the last division may contain early Psalms. It is an unwarrantable assumption that there can be no pre-exilic Psalms in the third division, because they must all have been included in one of the earlier collections.

(i) The First Division is coextensive with Book I (Pss. i—xli). All the Psalms in it have titles and are described as Psalms "of David," with the exception of i, ii, x, xxxiii. The

[1] It is maintained by Peters (*Development of the Psalter*, in *The New World*, 1893, p. 295) that the Psalms in the appendix to Book III (84—89) and in Books IV and V, which are composed largely of citations from, paraphrases of, or enlargements upon other scriptures, quote only Psalms preceding them in the order of arrangement.

exceptions are easily accounted for. Pss. i and ii are introductory, and probably did not belong to the original collection. Ps. x was either originally part of Ps. ix, or was written as a pendant to it. Ps. xxxiii appears to be of later date, inserted as an illustration of the last verse of Ps. xxxii. This collection may have been made by one editor: it does not appear, like the Second and Third Divisions, to have had collections already existing incorporated in it.

(ii) The Second Division corresponds to Books II and III (Ps. xlii—lxxxix). All the Psalms in it, except xliii (which is really part of xlii) and lxxi, bear titles. It consists of (*a*) seven Psalms (or eight, if xlii and xliii are reckoned separately) "of the sons of Korah" (xlii—xlix): (*b*) a Psalm "of Asaph" (l): (*c*) ten Psalms, all except lxvi, lxvii, "of David" (li—lxx): (*d*) an anonymous Psalm (lxxi), and a Psalm "of Solomon" (lxxii)[1]: (*e*) eleven Psalms "of Asaph" (lxxiii—lxxxiii): (*f*) a supplement containing three Psalms "of the sons of Korah" (lxxxiv, lxxxv, lxxxvii); one "of David," which is manifestly a cento from other Psalms (lxxxvi); one "of Heman the Ezrahite" (lxxxviii); and one "of Ethan the Ezrahite" (lxxxix). Thus it appears to have been formed by the union of at least three previously existing collections or of portions of them.

(iii) The Third Division corresponds to Books IV and V (Pss. xc—cl). In this division many Psalms have no title at all, and only a few bear the name of an author. In Book IV, Ps. xc bears the name of Moses: Pss. ci and ciii that of David. In Book V, Pss. cviii—cx, cxxii, cxxiv, cxxxi, cxxxiii,

[1] It has been conjectured by Ewald that Pss. li—lxxii originally stood after xli, so that the arrangement was (1) Davidic Psalms, i—xli; li—lxxii: (2) Levitical Psalms: (*a*) Korahite, xlii—xlix; (*b*) Asaphite, l, lxxiii—lxxxiii; (*c*) Korahite supplement, lxxxiv—lxxxix. The hypothesis is ingenious. It brings the Davidic Psalms together, and makes the note to lxxii. 20 more natural; and it connects the isolated Psalm of Asaph (l) with the rest of the group.

But it is clear that Books II and III formed a collection independent of Book I: and the editor may have wished to separate the mass of the Asaphite Psalms from the Korahite Psalms by placing the Davidic Psalms between them, while he put l next to li on account of the similarity of its teaching on sacrifice. The note to lxxii. 20 is true for his collection; and it does not necessarily imply that none but Davidic Psalms have preceded. Cp. Job xxxi. 40.

cxxxviii—cxlv, bear the name of David: cxxvii that of Solomon. Of the rest the majority have no title, or only that of a subordinate collection, e.g. 'A Song of Ascents,' a collection which probably existed previously in a separate form for the use of pilgrims. Other groups connected by their titles are the groups of 'Davidic' Psalms, cviii—cx, cxxxviii—cxlv; and by contents and form though not by titles, xciii—c, the Psalms beginning with *Hōdū* ('O give thanks') cv—cvii, and the Hallelujah Psalms, cxi—cxviii, cxlvi—cl.

We may now proceed to examine the characteristics of these divisions. The greater part of the Second Division is remarkably distinguished from the First and Third by the use of the Divine Names. Psalms xlii—lxxxiii are 'Elohistic'; that is to say, they employ the appellative *Elōhīm*='*God*,' in the place and almost to the exclusion of the proper name *Jehovah*, represented in the A.V. by *LORD*.

In Pss. i—xli, *Elōhīm* occurs absolutely[1] only 15 times, and in some of these cases it is required by the sense[2]. *Jehovah* on the other hand occurs 272 times, or, if titles and doxology are included, 278 times[3].

In Pss. xlii—lxxxiii, the proportion is reversed. *Elōhīm* occurs 200 times, *Jehovah* only 43 times (exclusive of the doxology, lxxii. 18); while in Pss. lxxxiv—lxxxix *Elohim* occurs only 7 times, *Jehovah* 31 times.

In Pss. xc—cl, *Jehovah* occurs 339 times, while *Elōhīm* (of the true God) is to be found only in Ps. cviii, which is taken direct from two Psalms in the Elohistic group, and in cxliv. 9, in a Psalm which is evidently compiled from various sources.

It may also be noted that *Adōnaī*='*Lord*' occurs much more

[1] By 'absolutely' is meant, without either a pronoun attached to it ('my God' and the like) or a qualifying word grammatically connected with it ('God of my righteousness,' 'God of my salvation,' and the like). The English reader must remember that three Hebrew words, *El*, *Elōah*, and *Elōhīm*, are represented by *God* in the A.V. *El* occurs absolutely 11 times in division i, 29 times in division ii, 14 times in division iii. *Elōah* is rare in the Psalter.

[2] E.g. ix. 17; x. 4, 13; xiv. 1, 2, 5; xxxvi. 1, 7. In iii. 2 the reading is doubtful. See note there.

[3] So Nestle, *Theol. Litztg.* 1896, col. 132.

frequently in the Second Division (31 times), than in the First (10 times), or Third (8 times).

This use of *Elōhīm* cannot be explained on internal grounds. It stands precisely as *Jehovah* does elsewhere, and not unfrequently the substitution leads to awkwardness of expression. Thus, for example, Ps. l. 7 is taken from Ex. xx. 2; "I am God thy God" is clearly the equivalent of "I am Jehovah thy God"; lxviii. 1, 2, 7, 8 are based upon Num. x. 35; Judg. v. 4, 5, 31; lxxi. 19 is from Ex. xv. 11; and in each case *Elōhīm* takes the place of *Jehovah*. More striking still is the fact that in two Psalms which are repeated from Book I (liii = xiv; lxx = xl. 13 ff.), the alteration is made, though in Ps. lxx *Jehovah* still occurs twice.

To what then is this peculiarity due? Is it characteristic of a particular style of writing? or is it the work of an editor or compiler?

It seems certain (1) from the alteration in Psalms adopted from Book I, (2) from the variety of the sources from which the Psalms in this group are derived, that the change is, in part at least, due to the hand of an editor. It may no doubt have been the usage of certain writers. It has been suggested that it was a custom in the family of Asaph, connected possibly with the musical or liturgical use of the Psalms. But even if the peculiarity was due in some instances to the author, there can be little doubt that, in the group as a whole, it is due to the collector or editor.

It seems clear also that the substitution of *Elōhīm* for *Jehovah* was not due to the superstitious avoidance of the use of the Sacred Name in later times[1]. The Elohistic collection is by no means the latest part of the Psalter. Books IV and V are composed of Psalms the majority of which are unquestionably of later date than those in the Elohistic group. But in these books the name *Jehovah* is used throughout, with the exceptions noted above. The compiler of Book V knew the Elohistic Psalms in their present form: and so apparently did the com-

[1] The use of *Elōhīm* as a proper name, without the article, must be distinguished from the use of *Elōhīm* with the article (הָאֱלֹהִים) in some of the later books of the O.T., e.g. Chronicles and Ecclesiastes.

piler of Ps. lxxxvi, in the appendix to the Elohistic collection, as may be inferred from a comparison of *v.* 14 with liv. 4 f.

The suggestion has been made that the compiler's object was to shew that the God of Israel was not merely a national God, and to counteract the Jewish spirit of exclusiveness[1]. Another suggestion is that the collection was thus adapted for the use of the exiles and Israelites in the dispersion, with a view to avoid the repetition of the Sacred Name in a heathen land[2]. But no positive result can be arrived at. The relation of the 'Elohistic' Psalms to the 'Elohistic' documents in the Pentateuch[3] is also an obscure question, which needs further investigation.

The argument for the original independence of the three divisions which is derived from the use of the names of God is corroborated:

(*a*) By the repetition in the Second Division of Psalms found in the First, and in the Third of Psalms found in the Second. Thus liii = xiv: lxx = xl. 13 ff.: cviii = lvii. 7—11, lx. 5—12.

(*b*) By the note appended to Ps. lxxii, "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended[4]." This note, whether taken over from an earlier collection by the editor of Books II and III, or inserted by him, appears to shew that he knew of no more Davidic Psalms, or at any rate that his collection contained no more. Clearly therefore his collection must have been independent of Books IV and V, which contain several more Psalms ascribed to David.

(*c*) By the difference already noticed in regard to titles. In this respect the Third Division is markedly distinguished from the First and Second. In these the Psalms with but few easily explained exceptions have titles, giving the name of the author or the collection from which the Psalm was taken, in many cases the occasion, and some musical or liturgical description or direction. But in the Third Division the majority of the

[1] Cp. Ottley, *Aspects of the O.T.*, p. 191.

[2] Only in the Temple, according to Jacob (*ZATW*, 1896, p. 158), was the Sacred Name JHVH pronounced.

[3] On these see Driver, *Lit. of O.T.*[6], pp. 116 ff.

[4] Cp. Job xxxi. 40.

Psalms are anonymous; musical and liturgical directions are rare; and titles of the obscure character of many of those in Divisions I and II are entirely absent. Moreover the musical term *Selah*, which occurs 17 times in Division I, and 50 times in Division II, is found but four times in Division III, and then in two Psalms ascribed to David (cxl, cxliii).

(*d*) By the character of the contents of the three divisions. Speaking broadly and generally, the Psalms of the First Division are *personal*, those of the Second, *national*, those of the Third, *liturgical*. There are numerous exceptions, but it is in the First Division that personal prayers and thanksgivings are chiefly to be found: in the Second, prayers in special times of national calamity (xliv, lx, lxxiv, lxxix, lxxx, lxxxiii, lxxxix), and thanksgivings in times of national deliverance (xlvi, xlvii, xlviii, lxxv, lxxvi, lxv—lxviii): in the Third, Psalms of praise and thanksgiving for general use in the Temple services (xcii, xcv—c, cv—cvii, cxi—cxviii, cxx—cxxxvi, cxlvi—cl).

The various steps in the formation of the Psalter may have been somewhat as follows:

(1) An original collection, which bore the name *Psalms* (or, *Prayers*) *of David*, from its first and greatest poet, though poems by other writers were not excluded from it. It has already been suggested (p. xxxii) that the general title of the collection was subsequently transferred to each separate Psalm in the First Group which was taken from it.

(2) The formation of another 'Davidic' collection, and the two Levitical hymnaries belonging to the families of Korah and Asaph.

(3) The 'Elohistic' collection was formed by the union of selections of Levitical Psalms from the Korahite and Asaphite hymnaries with another selection of 'Davidic' Psalms, and 'Elohistically' edited.

(4) To this collection was subsequently added an appendix of Korahite and other Psalms (lxxxiv—lxxxix), which were not altered by the Elohistic editor.

(5) Other collections grew up, perhaps to some extent simultaneously with the preceding stages, and these were united in the Third Division, with a gleaning of earlier Psalms, some of

which were believed to have been written by David, or were taken from a collection bearing his name.

(6) Finally, the various collections were united in the complete Psalter.

The date of these collections cannot be determined with certainty. Reasons have been given (p. xlvii f.) for thinking that the Psalter was practically complete by about 200 B.C.; and Psalms in the Third Division were known to the chronicler a century earlier. The Second Division contains some Psalms of the period of the Monarchy; but others cannot be earlier than the Exile and Return (e.g. lxxxv). Even the First Division was probably not completed in its present form till after the Exile, though the grounds upon which Psalms in Book I are referred to the post-exilic period are less positive and convincing.

The opinion is gaining ground that "the Psalter, in *all* its parts, is a compilation of the post-exilic age[1]," but this does not exclude the possibility that pre-exilic collections of Psalms existed, side by side with prophetic and historical books. Their extent however cannot now be determined[2].

The arrangement of the Psalms in the several books appears to have been determined partly by their arrangement in the smaller collections from which they were taken, where their order may have been fixed by considerations of date and authorship; partly by similarity of character and contents; partly by liturgical usage. Thus for example, we find groups of *Maschil* Psalms (xliii—xlv, lii—lv, lxxxviii, lxxxix), and *Michtam* Psalms (lvi—lx). Resemblance in character may account for the juxtaposition of l and li: xxxiii takes up xxxii. 11: xxxiv and xxxv both speak of 'the angel of Jehovah,' who is mentioned nowhere else in the Psalter. The title of xxxvi links it to xxxv. 27 ('servant of the LORD'): that of lvi may connect it with lv. 6. Pss. cxi—cxviii and cxlv—cl are liturgical groups.

[1] Driver, *Lit. of O.T.*[6], p. 386; cp. Davison, *Praises of Israel*, p. 29.

[2] The statement in 2 Macc. ii. 13 that "Nehemiah founding a library gathered together...the writings of David" (*τὰ τοῦ Δαυίδ*), may preserve a true tradition that he had some part in the compilation of the Psalter, but what it was is quite uncertain.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FORM OF HEBREW POETRY.

ANCIENT Hebrew poetry possesses neither metre nor rhyme[1]. Its essential characteristic is **rhythm**, which makes itself apparent both in the rhythmical cadence of each separate clause, and in the rhythmical balance of clauses when they are combined in a verse.

The Hebrew language is characterised by a vigorous terseness and power of condensation which cannot be preserved in English. Hence the clauses of Hebrew poetry are as a rule short. They consist sometimes of two words only, most frequently of three words, but not seldom of more than three words.

The rhythm of the clause often reflects the thought which it expresses. Thus, for example, the lively animated rhythm of the opening stanza (*vv.* 1—3) of Ps. ii vividly suggests the tumultuous gathering of the nations; while the stately measure of *v.* 4 presents the contrast of the calm and unmoved majesty of Jehovah enthroned in heaven. Or again, the evening hymn Ps. iv sinks to rest in its concluding verse with a rhythm as reposeful as the assurance which it expresses. A peculiar rhythm known as the *elegiac* or *Qīnāh* rhythm, in which each line is divided by a *caesura* into two unequal parts, was employed in dirges, and sometimes in other poems. It is found in Lam. i—iv, and occasionally in the Psalter, e.g. in Ps. xix. 7 ff.

[1] When Philo, Josephus, Eusebius, Jerome, and other early writers, compared Hebrew poetry with Greek and Latin metres, and spoke of hexameters and pentameters, sapphics, or trimeter and tetrameter iambics, they were using familiar language loosely. Various attempts have been made to discover a metrical system in the Psalms, on the basis of quantity, or of number of syllables or accents. Most of them involve the abandonment of the Massoretic vocalisation, and invoke the aid of 'a whole arsenal of licences.' Happily they do not concern the English reader.

Rhyme is found occasionally (e.g. viii. 3 [*Heb.* 4]; cvi. 4—7), but it appears to be accidental rather than intentional, and is never systematically employed. Both rhyme and metre have been used in medieval and modern Jewish poetry from the 7th cent. A.D. onwards.

The rhythm of clauses however, together with many other features of Hebrew poetry, such as assonance and alliteration, distinctive use of words and constructions, and so forth, chiefly concerns the student of the original. But the rhythmical balance of clauses combined in a verse admits of being reproduced in translation, and can to a large extent be appreciated by the English reader. Owing to this peculiar nature of its form, Hebrew poetry loses less in translation than poetry which depends for much of its charm upon rhymes or metres which cannot be reproduced in another language.

This balanced symmetry of form and sense is known as *parallelism of clauses* (*parallelismus membrorum*) or simply, *parallelism*[1]. It satisfies the love of regular and harmonious movement which is natural to the human mind, and was specially adapted to the primitive method of antiphonal chanting (Ex. xv. 1, 20, 21; 1 Sam. xviii. 7). Such poetry is not sharply distinguished from elevated prose. Many passages in the prophets are written in poetical style, and exhibit the features of parallelism as plainly as any of the Psalms[2].

The law of parallelism in Hebrew poetry has an exegetical value. It can often be appealed to in order to determine the construction or connexion of words, to elucidate the sense, or to decide a doubtful reading. The arrangement of the text in lines, adopted by Dr Scrivener in the standard edition of the A.V. from which the text in this edition is taken, and in the Revised Version, makes this characteristic of Hebrew poetry more plainly perceptible to the English reader.

The various forms of parallelism are generally classified under three principal heads:

(1) *Synonymous parallelism*, when the same fundamental thought is repeated in different words in the second line of a couplet. Thus in Ps. cxiv. 1:

"When Israel went forth out of Egypt,

[1] This fundamental principle of Hebrew poetry had been noticed by earlier writers, but attention was first called to its importance, and its nature was fully examined, by Robert Lowth (1710–1787), Professor of Poetry at Oxford, and afterwards Bishop of London, in his *De sacra Poesi Hebraeorum Praelectiones Academicae Oxonii habitae* (1753).

[2] E.g. Is. lx. 1—3; lxv. 13, 14; Hos. xi. 8, 9; Nah. i. 2.

The house of Jacob from a people of strange language": and the same construction is maintained throughout the Psalm. Every page of the Psalter supplies abundant examples.

(2) *Antithetic* or *contrasted parallelism*, when the thought expressed in the first line of a couplet is corroborated or elucidated by the affirmation of its opposite in the second line. This form of parallelism is specially suited to Gnomic Poetry, and is particularly characteristic of the oldest collection of proverbs in the Book of Proverbs (chaps. x—xxii. 16). Thus for example:

"Every wise woman buildeth her house:
But folly plucketh it down with her own hands" (Prov. xiv. 1).

But it is by no means rare in the Psalms, e.g. i. 6,

"For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous:
But the way of the wicked shall perish."

(3) *Synthetic* or *constructive parallelism*. Under this head are classed the numerous instances in which the two lines of the couplet stand in the relation of cause and consequence, protasis and apodosis, proposition and qualification or supplement, or almost any logical or constructional relation; or in which, as is very frequently the case, the parallelism is one of form only without any logical relation between the clauses. Thus e.g.:

"Yet *I* have set up my king,
Upon Zion my holy mountain" (Ps. ii. 6).

The simplest and most common form of parallelism is the couplet or distich: but this may be expanded into a tristich (triplet) or a tetrastich (quatrain) or even longer combinations, in a variety of ways. Thus the three lines of a verse may be synonymous:

"The floods have lifted up, O Jehovah,
The floods have lifted up their voice;
The floods lift up their din" (Ps. xciii. 3).

Or the first two lines may be synonymous, and the third supplementary, as in Ps. ii. 2:

"The kings of the earth take their stand,
And rulers hold conclave together,
Against Jehovah and against His anointed."

The third line may be antithetic, as in Ps. liv. 3:

"For strangers are risen up against me,
And violent men have sought my life:
They have not set God before their eyes."

Or the first line may be introductory, and the last two synonymous, as in Ps. iii. 7:

"Arise, Jehovah; save me, my God:
For Thou hast smitten all mine enemies on the cheek;
Thou hast shattered the teeth of the wicked."

In a few instances the first line is parallel to the third, and the second is parenthetical, e.g. Ps. iv. 1.

Similarly in tetrastichs (usually including two verses) we find (*a*) four synonymous lines, as in xci. 5, 6. Or (*b*) the first line is parallel to the second, and the third to the fourth, but the second couplet is required to complete the sense; e.g. in Ps. xviii. 15. Or (*c*) the first line may be parallel to the third, the second to the fourth, as in xxvii. 3:

"Though an host should encamp against me,
My heart shall not fear:
Though war should rise against me,
Even then will I be confident."

Or (*d*) the first three lines may be parallel, and the fourth supplementary, as in Ps. i. 3. Or (*e*) the first line may be independent, and the last three parallel, as in Prov. xxiv. 12.

Or two synonymous lines may be contrasted with two synonymous lines, as in xxxvii. 35, 36:

"I have seen the wicked in his terribleness,
And spreading himself like a green tree in its native soil:
And I passed by, and lo! he was not,
Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found."

Even longer combinations than tetrastichs sometimes occur, e.g. in Ps. xxxix. 12; Num. xxiv. 17: and on the other hand single lines are found, for the most part as introductions or conclusions, e.g. in Pss. xviii. 1; cix. 1; cxxx. 1; xcii. 8; Ex. xv. 18. While maintaining its fundamental characteristic of rhythm, Hebrew poetry admits of the greatest freedom and variety of form.

Strophical arrangement. Series of verses are, as might be expected, combined, and many Psalms consist of distinct groups

of verses. Such groups may conveniently be called *stanzas* or *strophes*, but the terms must not be supposed to imply that the same metrical or rhythmical structure recurs in each, as in Greek or Latin poetry. The strophes in a Psalm do not even necessarily consist of the same number of lines or verses.

Such divisions are sometimes clearly marked by a refrain, as in Pss. xlii—xliii, xlvi, lvii: or by alphabetical arrangement, as in cxix: or by *Selah*, denoting probably a musical interlude, as in Pss. iii and iv. But more frequently there is no external mark of the division, though it is clearly indicated by the structure and contents of the Psalm, as in Ps. ii.

Alphabetic or *Acrostic Psalms.*

Eight or nine Psalms[1] present various forms of alphabetic structure (Pss. ix, x, xxv, xxxiv, xxxvii, cxi, cxii, cxix, cxlv). In cxi and cxii each letter begins a line, and the lines are arranged in eight distichs and two tristichs.

In Pss. xxv, xxxiv, cxlv, Prov. xxxi, Lam. iv, each letter begins a distich, in Lam. i, ii, a tristich. In Ps. xxxvii each letter begins a pair of verses, commonly containing four, sometimes five, lines. In Lam. iii each verse in a stanza of three verses, and in Ps. cxix each verse in a stanza of eight verses, begins with the same letter, and the letters are taken in regular succession.

Such an arrangement, artificial though it seems, does not necessarily fetter a poet more than an elaborate metre or rhyme. It is not to be regarded as 'a compensation for the vanished spirit of poetry.' It was probably intended as an aid to memory, and is chiefly employed in Psalms of a proverbial character to connect detached thoughts, or when, as in Ps. cxix and in Lamentations, the poet needs some artificial bond to link together a number of variations upon one theme.

The elaborate development of the system in Lamentations proves that alphabetic structure is not in itself a proof of a very late date[2].

[1] Also Lam. i—iv: Prov. xxxi. 10—31. Traces of alphabetic structure have been pointed out in Nah. i. 2—10: and the original of Ecclesiasticus li. 13—30 was alphabetic. See Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom of Ben Sira*, pp. lxxvi ff.

[2] The early Roman poet Ennius wrote acrostics (Cicero, *de Divina-*

CHAPTER VII.

THE HEBREW TEXT, THE ANCIENT VERSIONS, AND THE ENGLISH VERSIONS.

1. *The Hebrew Text*[1]. A few words on the character of the Hebrew Text are necessary in order to justify the occasional departures from it, which will be met with in this commentary.

The extant Hebrew MSS. of the O.T. are all comparatively recent. The oldest of which the age is known with certainty is the St Petersburg MS. which is dated A.D. 916[2]; the majority are of the 12th to the 16th centuries. They all present substantially the same text[3], commonly called the Massoretic Text[4]. Thus while we possess MSS. of the N.T. written less than three centuries after the date of the earliest of the books, our oldest MS. of the O.T. is more than ten centuries posterior to the date of the latest of the books which it contains; and while our MSS. of the N.T. present a great variety of readings, those of the O.T. are practically unanimous in supporting the same text.

This unanimity was long supposed to be due to the jealous care with which the Jewish scribes had preserved the sacred

tione, ii. 54, § 111); and they are said to have been invented in Greece by the comedian Epicharmus (B.C. 540—450). We may compare the *alliteration*, which is a common feature of early poetry. Alliterative and acrostic poetry was written in Assyria and Babylonia. See *Proc. Soc. Bibl. Arch.* 1895, p. 131.

[1] For an outline of the history of the Hebrew text see the writer's *Divine Library of the Old Testament*, Lect. iii.

[2] Dr Ginsburg (*Introd. to the Heb. Bible*, p. 469) places an undated MS. in the British Museum somewhat earlier, c. 820—850 A.D.

[3] The variations between them are (roughly speaking) not greater than the variations between the different editions of the A.V. which have appeared since 1611, and they concern for the most part unimportant points of orthography.

[4] *Massōrā* means (1) *tradition* in general: (2) specially, tradition concerning the text of the O.T., and in particular the elaborate system of rules and *memoria technica* by which the later scribes sought to guard the text from corruption. Those who devoted themselves to this study were called 'masters of Massōrā,' or 'Massoretes'; and the term 'Massoretic' is applied to the text which their labours were designed to preserve.

text from the earliest times. But careful examination makes it clear that this is not the case. Since the rise of the schools of the 'Massoretes,' in the seventh and eighth centuries A.D., the text has, no doubt, been preserved with scrupulous exactness. But the recension which they adopted, whether originally derived from a single MS., as some suppose, or from a comparison of MSS. held in estimation at the time, unquestionably contains not a few errors, which had crept in during the long course of its previous history[1]. The proof of this lies in the following facts :—

(1) There are many passages in which the Massoretic Text cannot be translated without doing violence to the laws of grammar, or is irreconcilable with the context or with other passages.

(2) Parallel passages (e.g. Ps. xviii and 2 Sam. xxii) differ in such a way as to make it evident that the variations are due partly to accidental mistakes in transcription, partly to intentional revision.

(3) The Ancient Versions represent various readings, which in many cases bear a strong stamp of probability, and often lessen or remove the difficulties of the Massoretic Text.

The Massoretic Text as a whole is undoubtedly superior to any of the Ancient Versions: but we are amply justified in calling in the aid of those Versions, and in particular the Septuagint, wherever that text appears to be defective: and even where it is not in itself suspicious, but some of the Ancient Versions offer a different reading, that reading may deserve to be taken into account. In some few cases, where there is reason to

[1] The history of the Hebrew text may be divided into four periods. (1) The first of these periods was marked by the exclusive use of the archaic character: (2) the second, from the time of Ezra to the destruction of Jerusalem, saw the archaic character completely superseded by the square character, as the Hebrew language was superseded by Aramaic: (3) in the third period, from the Fall of Jerusalem to the end of the fifth century, the consonantal text was fixed: (4) in the fourth period, the exegetical tradition of the proper method of reading the text was stereotyped by the addition of the vowels, and an elaborate system of rules was invented to secure the accurate transmission of the text even in the minutest particulars.

suspect corruption anterior to all extant documentary authorities, it may even be allowable to resort to conjectural emendation, and such emendations will occasionally be mentioned.

The accidental corruptions to which all ancient texts were exposed in the process of transmission must of course be carefully distinguished from the intentional alterations to which the Psalms would be especially liable. The original text of a Psalm, like that of the hymns in modern hymn books, was doubtless often altered to adapt it for liturgical use. Archaisms would be modernised: some Psalms would be abbreviated; others would be amplified; in some cases (e.g. 1 Chr. xvi, Ps. cviii) portions of Psalms were combined. A comparison of Ps. xviii with 2 Sam. xxii appears to shew that, exactly as might be expected, peculiar forms were replaced by those in ordinary use, unusual constructions were simplified, archaisms and obscure expressions were explained. The processes which in this instance can be traced doubtless went on elsewhere, though to what extent it is impossible to say.

Two further points must be mentioned here in order to explain some of the notes:

(1) Hebrew, like other Semitic languages, was originally written without any vowels, except such long vowels as were represented by consonants. In the earlier stages of the language even these were sparingly used. The present elaborate system of vowel marks or 'points,' commonly called the 'Massoretic punctuation' or 'vocalisation,' was not reduced to writing until the seventh or eighth century A.D. It stereotyped the pronunciation and reading of the O.T. then current, and in many respects represents a far older tradition. But in a vowelless, or as it is called 'unpointed,' text, many words may be read in different ways, and the Massoretic punctuation does not appear in all cases to give the true way of reading the consonants.

(2) In some passages the traditional method of *reading* (Q'rē) did not agree with the consonants of the *written text* (K'thibh). In such cases the Massoretes did not alter the text, but appended a marginal note, giving the consonants with which the vowels shewn in the text were to be read. It should

be clearly understood that the *Q'rē* or marginal reading is the accepted reading of the Jewish textual tradition. But internal evidence, and the evidence of the Ancient Versions, lead us to prefer sometimes the *Q'rē* and sometimes the *K'thībh*. See for example Ps. xxiv. 4, where A.V. and R.V. rightly follow the *K'thībh*, and desert the Jewish tradition: or Ps. c. 3, where A.V. unfortunately followed the *K'thībh*, and R.V. has happily taken the *Q'rē*.

ii. *The Ancient Versions of the O.T.* These possess a fresh interest for the English reader, since the R.V. has given occasional references to them in its margin.

(i) *The Septuagint*[1]. The oldest and most valuable of them is the Greek Version, commonly called the SEPTUAGINT (Sept. or LXX), or Version of the Seventy Elders. It derives its name from the tradition that the translation of the Pentateuch was made by seventy or seventy-two elders, despatched from Jerusalem to Alexandria at the request of Ptolemy Philadelphus (B.C. 283—247). But the 'Letter of Aristeas,' on which this story rests, is undoubtedly a forgery, and all that can be asserted about the origin of the Septuagint is that it was made (1) in Egypt, and probably at Alexandria, (2) at different times and by different hands during the third and second centuries B.C., (3) before the vowel-points had been added to the Hebrew text, or that text had finally taken its present form.

The Pentateuch was probably translated first under the earlier Ptolemies: and the grandson of Jesus the son of Sirach, about 130 B.C., knew and used the version of the Hagiographa as well as of the Law and the Prophets[2]. This, it may be assumed, included the Psalter.

The character of the LXX varies greatly in different parts of the O.T. The work of pioneers in the task of translation, with no aids of grammar and lexicon to help them, naturally presents many imperfections. Yet not seldom it gives a valuable clue to the meaning of obscure words, or suggests certain corrections of

[1] For a full account of the LXX, the Ancient Versions based upon it, and the later Greek Versions, see Swete's admirable *Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (1900).

[2] See above, p. xlvi f.

the Massoretic Text. The version of the Psalter is on the whole fairly good, though it is often altogether at fault in difficult passages, and hopelessly astray as to the purport of the titles. It has a special interest for English readers, because, as will be seen presently, it has, through the Vulgate, indirectly had considerable influence on the version most familiar to many of them.

Unfortunately the Septuagint has not come down to us in its original form. The text has suffered from numerous corruptions and alterations, partly through the carelessness of transcribers, partly through the introduction of fresh renderings intended to harmonise it with the Massoretic Text, or taken from other Greek Versions.

The most important MSS. of the LXX for the Psalter to which reference will occasionally be made, are the following[1]:

The Vatican MS. (denoted by the letter B); a splendid copy of the Greek Bible, written in the fourth century A.D., and now preserved in the Vatican Library at Rome. Ten leaves of the Psalter, containing Pss. cv. 27—cxxxvii. 6, are unfortunately lost.

The text of this MS. is given in Dr Swete's edition of the LXX, the *lacuna* in the Psalter being supplied from the Sinaitic MS. (ℵ).

The equally splendid Sinaitic MS. (denoted by the letter ℵ *Aleph*), also written in the fourth century, found by Tischendorf in the convent of St Catharine on Mt Sinai, and now at St Petersburg.

The Alexandrine MS. (denoted by the letter A), written in the middle of the fifth century, brought from Alexandria, and now the great treasure of the British Museum. Nine leaves are wanting in the Psalter (Ps. xlix. 19—lxxix. 10).

The Septuagint, with all its defects, is of the greatest interest and importance to all students of the O.T.

(1) It preserves evidence for the text far more ancient than

[1] For fuller information see Swete's *Introduction*, and his edition of the LXX. published by the Camb. Univ. Press. The Psalter is to be had separately in a convenient form.

that of the oldest Hebrew MS., and often represents a text differing from the Massoretic recension.

(2) It is one of the most ancient helps for ascertaining the meaning of the language of the O.T., and is a valuable supplement to Jewish tradition.

(3) It was the means by which the Greek language was wedded to Hebrew thought, and the way was prepared for the use of that language in the New Testament.

(4) The great majority of the quotations made from the O.T. by the writers of the N.T. are taken from the LXX.

(5) It is the version in which the O.T. was studied by the Fathers of the Eastern Church, and indirectly, in the old Latin Versions made from it, by those of the Western Church, until Jerome's new translation from the Hebrew came into use. In the Psalter its influence was permanent, for as will be seen below (p. lxxii), the new version never superseded the old.

(ii) *The Targum.* After the return from the Babylonian exile, Aramaic, sometimes inaccurately called Chaldee, began to take the place of Hebrew in Palestine. As Hebrew died out, the needs of the people were met by oral translations or paraphrases in Aramaic. Hence arose the Aramaic Versions commonly called the TARGUMS[1]. The Targum of the Psalter is on the whole a fairly good version, though it often assumes the character of a paraphrastic interpretation. In its present form it appears to contain elements as late as the ninth century, but in the main it belongs to a much earlier date. As a rule it represents the Massoretic recension, and is not of much value for textual criticism. It is interesting as preserving interpretations current in the ancient Jewish Church, and in particular, for the reference of several passages in the Psalter to the Messiah[2].

(iii) *The Syriac Version*, known as the *Peshiṭṭā* (*simple* or *literal* version), probably originated at Edessa, about the second century A.D. It was made from the Hebrew, with the help of Jewish converts or actual Jews. But the present text in some parts of the O.T. agrees with the LXX in such a way as to

[1] *Targum* means *interpretation* or *translation*. Cp. *dragoman*, lit. *interpreter*.

[2] See e.g. Ps. xxi. 1, 7; xlv. 2, 7; lxi. 6, 8; lxxii. 1; lxxx. 15.

make it evident either that the original translators consulted that version, or that subsequent revisers introduced renderings from it. This is largely the case in the Psalms[1].

(iv) *The later Greek Versions* require only a brief mention. That of AQUILA of Pontus, a Jewish proselyte from heathenism, was made in the beginning of the second century A.D., when the breach between Church and Synagogue was complete, and the Jews desired an accurate version for purposes of controversy with Christians. It is characterised by a slavish but ingenious literalism.

That of THEODOTION, made towards the end of the second century, or possibly earlier[2], was little more than a revision of the LXX.

That of SYMMACHUS, made probably a little later than that of Theodotion, was also based on the LXX. It aimed at combining accuracy and perspicuity, and was by far the best of the three.

These versions were collected in the gigantic work of ORIGEN (A.D. 185—254) called the HEXAPLA, which contained in six parallel columns, (1) the Hebrew Text, (2) the Hebrew transliterated into Greek letters, (3) Aquila, (4) Symmachus, (5) the LXX, (6) Theodotion. In the Psalter the Hexapla became the Octapla by the addition of two columns containing two more Greek versions known as the 'Fifth' (*Quinta*) and 'Sixth' (*Sexta*).

Unfortunately only fragments of these versions are extant[3]. Generally, though not always, they agree with the Massoretic Text.

(v) *The Latin Versions.* The earliest Latin Version of the

[1] See Wright's *Short History of Syriac Literature*, p. 3.

[2] See Schürer's *Hist. of the Jewish People &c.*, Div. ii. § 33 (Vol. iii. p. 173, E. T.).

[3] Collected with exhaustive completeness in F. Field's *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt.* 1875. But since then fresh discoveries have been made. On some palimpsest leaves brought from the Genizah at Cairo by Dr Schechter some continuous fragments of Aquila's version (including portions of Pss. xxii, xc, xci) have been discovered: and a fragment of a copy of the Hexapla of the Psalms has come to light in the Ambrosian Library at Milan. See Swete, *Introd.* pp. 34, 62.

O.T., the VETUS LATINA or OLD LATIN, was made in North Africa from the LXX[1]. This version, of which various recensions appear to have been current, was twice revised by ST JEROME (Hieronymus). The first revision, made about A.D. 383, is known as the *Roman Psalter*, probably because it was made at Rome and for the use of the Roman Church at the request of Pope Damasus; the second, made about A.D. 387, is called the *Gallican Psalter*, because the Gallican Churches were the first to adopt it.

Shortly afterwards, about A.D. 389, Jerome commenced his memorable work of translating the O.T. directly from the Hebrew, which occupied him for fourteen years. After bitter opposition and many vicissitudes, it won its way by its intrinsic excellence to be the Bible of the Latin Church, and came to be known as THE VULGATE.

But long familiarity with the Old Latin Version of the Psalter made it impossible to displace it, and the Gallican Psalter is incorporated in the Vulgate in place of Jerome's new translation. That new translation, "iuxta Hebraicam veritatem," never came into general use. It is of great value for the interpretation of the text, and shews that the Hebrew text known to Jerome was in the main the same as the present Massoretic Text.

Accordingly, the student must remember that in the Psalter the Vulgate is an echo of the LXX, and not an independent witness to text or interpretation: while Jerome's translation (referred to as *Jer.*) occupies the place which the Vulgate does in the other books of the O.T.[2]

iii. *The English Versions*[3]. It would be impossible to give here even a sketch of the history of the English Bible. But as the Version with which many readers are most familiar is not that in the Bible, but that in the Prayer-Book, it seems worth while to give a brief account of its origin and characteristics.

As the Old Latin Version held its ground against Jerome's

[1] See Swete, *Introd.* p. 98.

[2] The best edition of Jerome's Psalter with critical apparatus is that by P. de Lagarde, *Psalterium iuxta Hebraeos Hieronymi*, 1874.

[3] See Bishop Westcott, *History of the English Bible*, ed. 2, 1872.

more accurate translation, because constant liturgical use had established it too firmly for it to be displaced, so the older English Version of the Psalter taken from the Great Bible has kept its place in the Prayer-Book, and has never been superseded for devotional use.

The 'Great Bible,' sometimes known as Cromwell's, because the first edition (April 1539) appeared under the auspices of Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's famous minister, sometimes as Cranmer's, because he wrote the preface to the second edition (April 1540), was a revision of Matthew's Bible (1537), executed by Coverdale with the help of Sebastian Münster's Latin version, published in 1534—5[1].

Matthew's Bible was a composite work. The Pentateuch and N.T. were taken from Tyndale's published translation; the books from Ezra to Malachi and the Apocrypha from Coverdale's version; the remaining books from Joshua to 2 Chron. from a translation which there is little reason to doubt was made by Tyndale.

The Psalter in Matthew's Bible was therefore Coverdale's work: and Coverdale's Version (1535) lays no claim to independence. He tells us in the *Epistle unto the Kinges hyghnesse* prefixed to the work, that he had "with a cleare conscience purely and faythfully translated this out of fyve sundry interpreters," and the original title-page described the book as "faithfully and truly translated out of Douche and Latyn into Englishe[2]."

It is not certain who the "fyve sundry interpreters" were; but the 'Douche' included the Swiss-German version known as the Zurich Bible[3] (1524—29), and Luther's version; and among the 'Latyn' translations, beside the Vulgate, was the version of Sanctes Pagninus (1527). It is worth while thus

[1] Münster was largely indebted to the commentaries of medieval Jewish scholars, especially R. David Kimchi (1160—1235), and their influence is constantly to be traced in the English Versions.

[2] For a full account of Coverdale's work see Bp Westcott's *History of the English Bible*, chap. iii.

[3] So called, because it was the work of a band of scholars at Zurich, including Zwingli, Pellican, and Leo Juda. Coverdale's indebtedness to this version in the Psalter is very large.

to trace the pedigree of the Prayer-Book Version, for in spite of successive revisions, it retains many marks of its origin. Many of its peculiar renderings, and in particular the additions which it contains, are derived from the LXX through the Vulgate.

In the Great Bible these additions were clearly distinguished by being printed in smaller type, and enclosed in brackets. Thus e.g. in Ps. xiv, *no not one* (*v.* 2), *euen where no fear was* (*v.* 9), and the whole of *vv.* 5—7, are in smaller type: and in xxix. 1, *bring yong rammes unto the Lorde.* These distinctions were retained in the Standard Prayer-Book of 1662 (the so-called *Annexed Book*), but have been dropped in modern editions.

The Prayer-Book Psalter appears to be a reproduction, not critically exact, of the last revision of the Great Bible (Nov. 1540)[1]. The text differs in a considerable number of passages[2] from that of 1539[3].

The A.V. of 1611, though more accurate, is less melodious, and when, at the revision of the Prayer-Book in 1662, the version of 1611 was substituted in the Epistles and Gospels, the old Psalter was left untouched. "The choirs and congregations had grown familiar with it, and it was felt to be smoother and more easy to sing." Coverdale was a consummate master of melodious prose; and the "exquisite rhythm, graceful freedom of rendering, and endeavour to represent the spirit as well as the letter of the original" have justly given to his work "the pre-eminent distinction of being the version through which the Psalms as an instrument of devotional exercise, as an aid to meditation and the religious habit of mind, and as a formative influence in the spiritual education of man, now live in their fullest and widest use[4]."

[1] Bp Westcott, *The Paragraph Psalter*, p. xi.

[2] See examples in Driver, *The Parallel Psalter*, p. xv. Some interesting archaisms disappeared in the revision: e.g. *loave* for *praise* (Ps. cvii. 32); *sparsed* for *dispersed* (cxii. 9). See Driver, p. xvii.

[3] This is easily accessible in Prof. Earle's reprint, with introduction and notes, *The Psalter of* 1539, *a Landmark in English Literature* (1892).

[4] Earle, p. vi.

The Revised Version of 1885 has made a great advance upon the A.V. in respect of accuracy of rendering. The changes made by the Revisers will, as a rule, be quoted in this commentary, but the translation must be read and studied as a whole in order properly to appreciate their force and value. Even with the help which the R.V. now supplies to the English reader, it does not seem superfluous to endeavour by more exact renderings to bring the student closer to the sense of the original.

It is well known that the A.V. frequently creates artificial distinctions by different renderings of the same word, and ignores real distinctions by giving the same rendering for different words: and this, though to a far less extent, is still the case in the R.V.[1] Rigid uniformity of rendering may be misleading, but it is well that attention should be called to distinctions where they exist. Again, the precise force of a tense, or the exact emphasis of the original, cannot always be given without some circumlocution which would be clumsy in a version intended for general use: but it is worth while to attempt to express finer shades of meaning in a commentary.

The best translation cannot always adequately represent the original: and it is well that the English reader should be reminded that the sense cannot always be determined with precision, and may often best be realised by approaching it from different sides.

[1] See, for example, iii. 2, 7, 8, where the connexion is obscured by the rendering of the same word *help* in *v.* 2, and *salvation* in *v.* 8. Two entirely different words are rendered *blessed* in xli. 1, 13. The first expresses congratulation (*Happy:* cp. *be made happy* in *v.* 2): the second expresses the tribute of human reverence to the divine majesty. The word rendered *trust* or *put trust in* in vii. 1, xi. 1 is quite distinct from the word similarly rendered in xiii. 5. It means *to take refuge in*, and the sense gains remarkably by the correct rendering. The exact rendering of a tense may be sufficient to draw a forcible picture, as in vii. 15. For some excellent remarks upon principles of translation see Driver, *The Parallel Psalter*, pp. xxv ff.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MESSIANIC HOPE.

Poetry was the handmaid of Prophecy in preparing the way for the coming of Christ. Prophetic ideas are taken up, developed, pressed to their full consequences, with the boldness and enthusiasm of inspired imagination. The constant use of the Psalms for devotion and worship familiarised the people with them. Expectation was aroused and kept alive. Hope became part of the national life. Even Psalms, which were not felt beforehand to speak of Him Who was to come, contributed to mould the temper of mind which was prepared to receive Him when He came in form and fashion far other than that which popular hopes had anticipated; and they were recognised in the event as pointing forward to Him. Cp. Lk. i, ii.

This work of preparation went forward along several distinct lines, some of which are seen to converge or meet even in the O.T., while others were only harmonised by the fulfilment. Thus (1) some Psalms pointed forward to the Messiah as Son of God and King and Priest: others (2) prepared the way for the suffering Redeemer: others (3) only find their full meaning in the perfect Son of Man: others (4) foretell the Advent of Jehovah Himself to judge and redeem.

All these different lines of thought combined to prepare the way for Christ; but it must be remembered that the preparation was in great measure silent and unconscious. It is difficult for us who read the O.T. in the light of its fulfilment to realise how dim and vague and incomplete the Messianic Hope must have been until the Coming of Christ revealed the divine purpose, and enabled men to recognise how through long ages God had been preparing for its consummation.

(1) *The Royal Messiah* (Psalms ii, xviii, xx, xxi, xlv, lxi, lxxii, lxxxix, cx, cxxxii).

The Kingdom of Israel was at once the expression of God's purpose to establish an universal kingdom upon earth, and the means for the accomplishment of that purpose. The people of Israel was Jehovah's son, His firstborn (Ex. iv. 22, 23; Deut. xxxii.

6; Hos. xi. 1), and His servant (Is. xli. 8); and the Davidic king as the representative of the nation was Jehovah's son, His first-born (2 Sam. vii. 14; Ps. ii. 7; lxxxix. 26, 27), and His servant (2 Sam. vii. 5 ff.). He was no absolute despot, reigning in His own right, but the 'Anointed of Jehovah' who was the true King of Israel, appointed by Him as His viceroy and representative (Ps. ii. 6). He was said to "sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel" (1 Chr. xxviii. 5), or even "on the throne of the LORD" (1 Chr. xxix. 23; 2 Chr. ix. 8).

Thus he was at once the representative of the people before Jehovah, and the representative of Jehovah before the people, and before the nations. To Him as Jehovah's viceroy was promised the sovereignty over the nations. Nathan's message to David (2 Sam. vii) was the Davidic king's patent of adoption and title deed of inheritance. It was the proclamation of "the everlasting covenant" which God made with the house of David (2 Sam. xxiii. 5). Upon the divine choice of David and his house, and in particular upon this great prophecy, are based a series of what may be called *Royal Psalms*. Critical events in the life of David or later kings, or in the history of the kingdom, gave occasion to David himself, or other poet-seers, to declare the full significance and extent of that promise. Successive kings might fail to realise their rightful prerogatives, but the divine promise remained unrevoked, waiting for one who could claim its fulfilment in all its grandeur.

Different aspects of the promise are presented in different Psalms. They can only be briefly summarised here: for fuller explanation reference must be made to the introductions and notes to each Psalm.

In Ps. ii the prominent thought is the divine sonship of the anointed king and its significance. The nations are mustering with intent to renounce their allegiance to the king recently enthroned in Zion. But their purpose is vain, for the king is none other than Jehovah's Son and representative. In rebelling against him they are rebelling against Jehovah, and if they persist, will do it to their own destruction.

In David's great thanksgiving (Ps. xviii) he celebrates Jehovah

as the giver of victory, and recognises that his position as "the head of the nations" (*v.* 43) has been given him in order that he may proclaim Jehovah's glory among them (*v.* 49).

The relation of the king to Jehovah as His anointed representative is the ground of intercession and confidence in Ps. xx. 6; and the thanksgiving for victory which follows in Ps. xxi naturally dwells upon the high dignity which belongs to him in virtue of that relation, and anticipates his future triumphs. The same thought is repeated in Ps. lxi. 6 f.

Ps. xlv is a marriage song for Solomon or some later king of the house of David. In lofty language the poet sets before him the ideal of his office (cp. 2 Sam. xxiii. 3 ff.), and claims for him the fulness of the promise of eternal dominion. The union with a foreign princess suggests the hope of the peaceful union of all nations in harmonious fellowship with Israel.

Ps. lxxii is an intercession for Solomon or some other king on his accession. In glowing colours it depicts the ideal of his office, and prays that he may fulfil it as the righteous sovereign who redresses wrong, and may rule over a world-wide empire, receiving the willing homage of the nations to his virtue, and proving himself the heir of the patriarchal promise.

In some crisis of national disaster the author of Ps. lxxxix recites the promise to David, and contrasting its brilliant hopes with the disappointment which it was his trial to witness, pleads for the renewal of God's favour.

Ps. cx is a kind of solemn oracle. It describes David as king, priest, and conqueror. Jehovah adopts him as His assessor, placing him in the seat of honour at His side. Though not of Aaron's line he is invested with a priestly dignity. The new king of Zion must inherit all the privileges of the ancient king of Salem, and enter upon the religious as well as the civil memories of his capital.

Once more, in Ps. cxxxii, possibly in days when the kingdom had ceased to exist, and the representative of the house of David was only a governor appointed by a foreign conqueror, the ancient promise is pleaded in confidence that it must still find fulfilment.

These Psalms refer primarily to the circumstances of the

time. The revolt of the nations, the royal marriage, the accession of a prince of unique promise, the installation of the king, gave the inspired poets opportunity for dwelling on the promises and hopes connected with the Davidic kingdom. But successive princes of David's line failed to fulfil their high destiny, to subdue the nations, to rule the world in righteousness, to establish a permanent dynasty. The kingdom ceased to exist; yet it was felt that the divine promise could not fail; and hope was directed to the future. Men were led to see that the divine promise had not been frustrated but postponed, and to look for the coming of One who should 'fulfil' the utmost that had been spoken of Israel's king[1].

(2) *The suffering Messiah* (Pss. xxii, lxix, cix, xxxv, xli, lv). Men's minds had to be prepared not only for a triumphant King, but for a suffering Saviour. The great prophecy of Is. lii, liii finds preludes and echoes in the Psalter in what may be called the *Passion Psalms*. The sufferings of David and other saints of the old dispensation were typical: they helped to familiarise men with the thought of the righteous suffering for God's sake, of suffering as the path to victory, of glory to be won for God and deliverance for man through suffering. They were the anticipation, as the sufferings of the members of the Christian Church are the supplement (Col. i. 24), of the afflictions of Christ.

But not only were these sufferings in themselves typical, but the records of them were so moulded by the Spirit of God as to prefigure the sufferings of Christ even in circumstantial details. These details are not the most important part of the type or prophecy; but they serve to arrest attention, and direct it to the essential idea.

These Psalms do not appear to have been applied to the Messiah in the Jewish Church as the Royal Psalms were. It was Christ Himself who first shewed His disciples that He must gather up into Himself and fulfil the manifold experiences of the people of God, in suffering as well as in triumph, and taught them to recognise that those sufferings had been foreor-

[1] For references to the Messianic interpretations of the Targums see note on p. lxx.

dained in the divine purpose, and how they had been foreshadowed throughout the Old Testament.

Ps. xxii stands by itself among these Psalms. In its description of the Psalmist's sufferings, and in its joyous anticipation of the coming extension of Jehovah's kingdom, it foreshadows the Passion of Christ and its glorious fruits: and our Lord's use of the opening words (and probably of the whole Psalm) upon the Cross, stamps it as applicable to and fulfilled in Him.

Ps. lxix records the sufferings of one who was persecuted for God's sake (*vv.* 7 ff.). In his consuming zeal for God's house, in his suffering as the victim of causeless hatred (cp. xxxv. 19; cix. 3 ff.), in his endurance of reproach for his faithfulness to God, he was the prototype of Christ. The contemptuous mockery (*vv.* 12, 20) and maltreatment (*vv.* 21, 26) to which he was exposed, prefigured the actual sufferings of Christ. The curse which falls upon his persecutors (*v.* 25; cp. cix. 8) becomes the doom of the arch-traitor (Acts i. 20); and the judgement invoked upon his enemies (*vv.* 22—24) finds its fulfilment in the rejection of apostate Israel (Rom. xi. 9, 10).

The treachery of the faithless friend described in xli. 9 (cp. lv. 12 ff.) anticipates the treachery of the false disciple.

(3) *The Son of Man* (Pss. viii, xvi, xl). Psalms which describe the true destiny of man, the issue of perfect fellowship with God, the ideal of complete obedience, unmistakably point forward to Him who as the representative of man triumphed where man had failed.

Ps. viii looks away from the Fall and its fatal consequences to man's nature, position, and destiny in the purpose of God. Christ's perfect humanity answered to that ideal, and is seen to be the pledge of the fulfilment of the divine purpose for the whole race of mankind (Heb. ii. 6 ff.).

In Ps. xvi faith and hope triumph over the fear of death in the consciousness of fellowship with God. Yet the Psalmist did not escape death; his words looked forward, and first found their adequate realisation in the Resurrection of Christ (Acts ii. 25 ff.; xiii. 35).

In Ps. xl the Psalmist professes his desire to prove his gratitude to God by offering the sacrifice of obedience. But that

obedience was at best imperfect. His words must wait to receive their full accomplishment in the perfect obedience of Christ (Heb. x. 5 ff.).

Christ as the perfect Teacher adopted and 'fulfilled' the methods of the teachers of the old dispensation (Ps. lxxviii. 1).

(4) *The coming of God.* Another series of Psalms describes or anticipates the Advent of Jehovah Himself to judge and to redeem. Such are xviii. 7 ff., l, lxviii, xcvi—xcviii. They correspond to the prophetic idea of 'the day of Jehovah,' which culminates in Mal. iii. 1 ff. They do not indeed predict the Incarnation, but they served to prepare men's minds for the direct personal intervention of God which was to be realised in the Incarnation. We find passages originally spoken of Jehovah applied in the N.T. to Christ[1]. The words of Ps. lxviii. 18, which describe the triumphant ascent of Jehovah to His throne after the subjugation of the world, are adapted and applied to the triumphant return of Christ to heaven and His distribution of the gifts of grace (Eph. iv. 8).

The words of cii. 25, 26, contrasting the immutability of the Creator with the mutability of created things, originally addressed to Jehovah by the exile who appealed to Him to intervene on behalf of Zion, are applied to the Son through whom the worlds were made (Hebr. i. 10).

Thus the inspired poetry of the Psalter, viewing the Davidic kingdom in the light of the prophetic promises attached to it, played its part in preparing men's minds for a King who should be God's Son and representative, as it came to be interpreted in the course of history through failure and disappointment. The record of the Psalmists' own sufferings helped to give some insight into the part which suffering must perform in the redemption of the world. Their ideals of man's destiny and duty implied the hope of the coming of One who should perfectly fulfil them. The expectation of Jehovah's advent to judge and redeem anticipated a direct divine interposition for the establishment of the divine kingdom in the world.

It is not to be supposed that the relation of these various elements of the preparation could be recognised, or that they

[1] See Bp Westcott's *Hebrews*, p. 89.

could be harmonised into one consistent picture beforehand It was reserved for the event to shew that the various lines of hope and teaching were not parallel but convergent, meeting in the Person and Work of Him Who is at once God and Man, Son and Servant, Priest and King, Sufferer and Victor.

It has been assumed thus far that these Psalms refer primarily to the circumstances under which they were written. Many commentators however regard some of the 'Royal Psalms,' in particular Pss. ii, xlv, lxxii, cx, as direct prophecies of the Messianic King: some, because they are unable to discover the precise historical occasion in existing records: others, because the language seems to reach beyond what could be predicated of any earthly king, and the N. T. application of these Psalms to Christ appears to them to require that they should be referred to Him alone.

The particular historical reference of each of these Psalms will be discussed in the introduction to it: here it must suffice to observe that such Psalms as ii and xlv produce the decided impression that they were written in view of contemporary events. Lofty as is the language used, it is no more than is warranted by the grandeur of the divine promises to the house of David; and if the words are applied to Christ with a fulness and directness which seems to exclude any lower meaning, it must be remembered that it was through the institution of the kingdom that men were taught to look for Him, and their fulfilment in Him presumes rather than excludes the view that they had a true, if partial, meaning for the time at which they were written.

Similarly in the case of the 'Passion Psalms' it has been thought that, at least in Ps. xxii, the Psalmist is speaking in the person of Christ. Yet even this Psalm plainly springs out of personal suffering; though it is equally plain that the character of that suffering was providentially moulded to be a type, and the record of it inspired by the Holy Spirit to be a prophecy, of the sufferings of Christ. That Ps. lxix cannot as a whole be placed in the mouth of Christ is evident, if for no other reason, from the confession of sin in *v.* 5.

Have then these Psalms, has prophecy in general, a 'double

sense?' a primary historical sense in relation to the circumstances under which they were written, and a secondary typical or prophetical sense, in which they came to be understood by the Jewish and afterwards by the Christian Church? We may no doubt legitimately talk of a 'double sense,' if what we mean is that Psalmist and Prophet did not realise the full meaning of their words, and that that meaning only came to be understood as it was unfolded by the course of history. But is it not a truer view to regard both senses as essentially one? The institutions of Israel and the discipline of the saints of old were designed to express the divine purpose as the age and the people were able to receive it. The divine purpose is eternally one and the same, though it must be gradually revealed to man, and man's apprehension of it changes. And it is involved in any worthy conception of inspiration that inspired words should express divine ideas with a fulness which cannot at once be intelligible, but only comes to be understood as it is interpreted by the course of history or illuminated by the light of fuller revelation.

Inspired words are "springing and germinant" in their very nature: they grow with the growing mind of man. They are 'fulfilled,' not in the sense that their meaning is exhausted and their function accomplished, but in the sense that they are enlarged, expanded, ennobled. What is temporary and accidental falls away, and the eternal truth shines forth in its inexhaustible freshness and grandeur.

For us the Psalms which were designed to prepare the way for the coming of Christ bear witness to the unity of the divine plan which is being wrought out through successive ages of the world.

(5) *The nations.* Under the head of Messianic Hope in the Psalter must be included the view which is presented of the relation of the nations to Jehovah and to Israel. Few features are more striking than the constant anticipation of the inclusion of all nations in Jehovah's kingdom.

On the one hand indeed the nations appear as the deadly enemies of Jehovah's people, leagued together for its destruction (ii, lxxxiii), but doomed themselves to be destroyed if they

persist in their unhallowed purpose (ii. 9; ix. 17 ff.; xxxiii. 10; xlvi. 6 ff.; lix. 5, 8).

But concurrently with this view of the relation of the nations to Jehovah and Israel, another and more hopeful view is constantly presented. The nations as well as Israel belong to Jehovah, and are the objects of His care; they will eventually render Him homage; and Israel is to be the instrument for accomplishing this purpose and establishing the universal divine kingdom.

(*a*) The earth and all its inhabitants belong to Jehovah as their Creator (xxiv. 1; cp. viii. 1); they are under His observation (lxvi. 7), and subservient to His purposes (xxxiii. 14); He disciplines and teaches them (xciv. 10); they are addressed as being capable of moral instruction (xlix. 1).

He is the supreme and universal King and Judge (xxii. 28; xlvi. 10; xlvii. 2, 8, 9; xcvi. 13; xcviii. 9; xcix. 2; cxiii. 4); the nations are constantly exhorted to render Him homage (ii. 8 ff.), to fear Him (xxxiii. 8), to praise Him (lxvi. 1 f.; cxvii. 1; cxlv. 21), and even to worship Him in His temple (xcvi. 7 ff.; c. 1, 2).

(*b*) The time will come when all nations will acknowledge His sovereignty (xxii. 27; lxvi. 4; lxviii. 29 ff.; lxxxvi. 9; cii. 22). The kings of the earth will render homage to their sovereign (cii. 15; cxxxviii. 4). To Him as the hearer of prayer shall "all flesh" come (lxv. 2); He is the confidence of all the ends of the earth (lxv. 5); and the Psalter ends with the chorus of universal praise from every living thing (cl. 6).

(*c*) Israel is Jehovah's instrument for accomplishing the world-wide extension of His kingdom.

In the early days of the kingdom it may have seemed that Israel's destiny was to subjugate the nations and include them in the kingdom of Jehovah by conquest (ii; xviii. 43; xlvii); yet the thought is never far distant that the object of Israel's victories is to make Jehovah known (xviii. 49; lvii. 9), and to lead to the harmonious union of the nations with His people (xlvii. 9). Ps. xlv suggests the hope of peaceful alliance, Ps. lxxii of conquest by moral supremacy (*vv.* 8 ff.). If to the last the thought of actual conquests survived (cxlix. 6 ff.), a more spiritual conception of Israel's relation to the nations grew up

side by side with it. The Psalmist's gratitude for personal deliverance widens out into the prospect of the universal worship of Jehovah (xxii). Ps. lxvii expresses Israel's consciousness of its calling to be a blessing to the world, and the final purpose of its prosperity is the conversion of the nations. Zion becomes the spiritual metropolis in which nations once hostile are enrolled as citizens (lxxxvii); and Israel's deliverance from captivity is seen to lead to the universal worship of her Deliverer, and the gathering of the nations to Zion to serve Him (cii. 15, 21 ff.; cp. xcvi—xcviii).

Thus, even under the limitations of the old Covenant, were formed the hopes which are in part fulfilled, and in part still await fulfilment, in the Christian Church.

CHAPTER IX.

ON SOME POINTS IN THE THEOLOGY OF THE PSALMS.

A thorough examination of the Theology of the Psalms would exceed the limits of the present work. It would include an investigation whether any progress and development of doctrine can be traced in the Psalms of different periods. All that can be attempted here is a few brief notes on some points which require the student's attention or present special difficulties.

(i) *The relation of the Psalms to the Ordinances of Worship.* The Psalms represent the inward and spiritual side of the religion of Israel. They are the manifold expression of the intense devotion of pious souls to God, of the feelings of trust and hope and love which reach a climax in such Psalms as xxiii, xlii—xliii, lxiii, lxxxiv. They are the many-toned voice of prayer in the widest sense, as the soul's address to God in confession, petition, intercession, meditation, thanksgiving, praise, both in public and private. They offer the most complete proof, if proof were needed, how utterly false is the notion that the religion of Israel was a formal system of external rites and ceremonies. In such a book frequent reference to the external ordinances of worship is scarcely to be expected: but they are presumed,

and the experience of God's favour is constantly connected with the Sanctuary and its acts of worship[1].

There are frequent references to *the Temple* as the central place of worship, where men appear before God, and where He specially reveals His power glory and goodness, and interprets the ways of His Providence (xlii. 2; xlviii. 9; lxiii. 2; lxv. 4; lxviii. 29; lxxiii. 17; xcvi. 6 ff.; &c.).

The impressive splendour of the priestly array is alluded to (xxix. 2, note; xcvi. 9; cx. 3).

The delight of the festal pilgrimages to Zion is vividly described (xlii, xliii, lxxxiv, cxxii, cp. lv. 14). Consuming zeal for God's house in a corrupt age characterised the saint and exposed him to persecution (lxix. 9).

The joyous character of the O. T. worship is so striking a feature of the Psalter as scarcely to need special notice. The Psalter as the hymn-book of the Second Temple was entitled 'The Book of Praises.' We hear the jubilant songs of the troops of pilgrims (xlii. 4; cp. Is. xxx. 29): we see the processions to the Temple with minstrels and singers (lxviii. 24, 25): we hear its courts resound with shouts of praise (xcv. 1 ff.; c. 1, 4), and music of harp and psaltery, timbrel and trumpet, cymbals and pipe (cl.).

Sacrifice is referred to as the sanction of the covenant between God and His people (l. 5; cp. Ex. xxiv. 5 ff.); as the regular accompaniment of approach to God (xx. 3; l. 8 ff.; lxvi. 13, 15; xcvi. 8); as the natural expression of gratitude (xxvii. 6; xliii. 4; li. 19; liv. 6; cvii. 22; cxvi. 17; cxviii. 27), especially in connexion with vows (lvi. 12; lxvi. 13 ff.), which are frequently mentioned (xxii. 25; lxi. 5, 8; lxv. 1; lxxvi. 11; cxvi. 14, 18). The Levitical ceremonies of purification are alluded to as symbols of the inward cleansing which must be effected by God Himself (li. 7).

But the great prophetic doctrine[2] of the intrinsic worthlessness of sacrifice apart from the disposition of the worshipper is emphatically laid down. It is not sacrifice but obedience that

[1] Cp. Oehler, *O. T. Theology*, § 201.

[2] From 1 Sam. xv. 22 onwards. See Amos v. 21 ff.; Hos. vi. 6; Is. i. 11 ff.; Mic. vi. 6 ff.; Jer. vi. 20; vii. 21 ff.; xiv. 12.

God desires (xl. 6 ff.); it is not thank-offering, but a thankful heart which finds acceptance with Him (l. 14, 23; cp. lxix. 30, 31); it is not sacrifice, but contrition which is the condition of forgiveness (li. 16 ff.). Penitence and prayer are true sacrifices (li. 17; cxli. 2): and the moral conditions which can alone make sacrifice acceptable and are requisite for approach to God are constantly insisted upon (iv. 5; xv. 1 ff.; xxiv. 3 ff.; xxvi. 6; lxvi. 18).

It is God Himself who 'purges away' iniquity (lxv. 3; lxxviii. 38; lxxix. 9; lxxxv. 2).

(ii) *The self-righteousness of the Psalmists.* Readers of the Psalms are sometimes startled by assertions of integrity and innocence which appear to indicate a spirit of self-righteousness and self-satisfaction approximating to that of the Pharisee (Luke xviii. 9). Thus David appeals to be judged according to his righteousness and his integrity (vii. 8; cp. xxvi. 1 ff.), and regards his deliverance from his enemies as the reward of his righteousness and innocence (xviii. 20 ff.); sincerity and innocence are urged as grounds of answer to prayer (xvii. 1 ff.), and God's most searching scrutiny is invited (xxvi. 2 ff.).

Some of these utterances are no more than asseverations that the speaker is innocent of particular crimes laid to his charge by his enemies (vii. 3 ff.); others are general professions of purity of purpose and single-hearted devotion to God (xvii. 1 ff.). They are not to be compared with the self-complacency of the Pharisee, who prides himself on his superiority to the rest of the world, but with St Paul's assertions of conscious rectitude (Acts xx. 26 ff.; xxiii. 1). They breathe the spirit of simple faith and childlike trust, which throws itself unreservedly on God. Those who make them do not profess to be absolutely sinless, but they do claim to belong to the class of the righteous who may expect God's favour, and they do disclaim all fellowship with the wicked, from whom they expect to be distinguished in the course of His Providence.

And if God's present favour is expected as the reward of right conduct, it must be remembered that the Israelite looked for the visible manifestation of the divine government of the world in the reward of the godly and the punishment of the evildoer in this present life (1 Kings viii. 32, 39). He felt that he had a

right to be treated according to the rectitude of which he was conscious.

Further, it was commonly supposed that there was a proportion between sin and suffering; that exceptional suffering was an evidence of exceptional guilt. This idea throws light upon the assertions of national innocence in xliv. 17 ff., and of personal innocence in lix. 3. They are clearly relative, as much as to say, 'We know of no national apostasy which can account for this defeat as a well-merited judgement:' 'I am not conscious of any personal transgression for which this persecution is a fitting chastisement.' So Job repeatedly acknowledges the sinfulness of man, but denies that he has been guilty of any special sin to account for his extraordinary afflictions.

Some however of these utterances undoubtedly belong to the O. T. and not to the N.T. They are the partial expression of an eternal truth (Matt. xvi. 27), in a form which belongs to the age in which they were spoken. The N. T. has brought a new revelation of the nature of sin, and a more thorough self-knowledge: it teaches the inadmissibility of any plea of merit on man's part (Luke xvii. 10). But the docile spirit which fearlessly submits itself to the divine scrutiny and desires to be instructed (cxxxix. 23, 24) has nothing in common with the Pharisaism which is by its very nature incapable of improvement.

And side by side with these assertions of integrity we find in the Psalms the fullest recognition of personal sinfulness (li. 5; lxix. 5), of man's inability to justify himself before God (cxxx. 3 ff., cxliii. 2), of his need of pardon cleansing and renewal (xxxii, li, lxv. 3), of his dependence on God for preservation from sin (xix. 12 ff.), of the barrier which sin erects between him and God (lxvi. 18, l. 16 ff.); as well as the strongest expressions of absolute self-surrender and dependence on God and entire trust in His mercy (xxv. 4 ff., lxxiii. 25 ff.).

(iii) The so-called *Imprecatory Psalms* have long been felt to constitute one of the 'moral difficulties' of the O.T. We are startled to find the most lofty and spiritual meditations interrupted by passionate prayers for vengeance upon enemies, or ending in triumphant exultation at their destruction. How, we ask, can such utterances be part of a divine revelation? How

can the men who penned them have been in any sense inspired by the Holy Spirit?

These imprecations cannot be explained away, as some have thought, by rendering the verbs as futures, and regarding them as authoritative *declarations* of the certain fate of the wicked. Of these there are many, but in not a few cases the form of the verb is that which specifically expresses a wish or prayer, and it cannot be rendered as a simple future.

Nor again can the difficulty be removed by regarding the imprecations of Pss. lxix and cix as the curses not of the Psalmist himself but of his enemies. Even if this view were exegetically tenable for these two Psalms, which is doubtful, expressions of the same kind are scattered throughout the Psalter. Moreover the Book of Jeremiah contains prayers for vengeance on his enemies, at least as terrible as those of Pss. lxix and cix (Jer. xi. 18 ff.; xv. 15 ff.; xvii. 18; xviii. 19 ff.; xx. 11 ff.).

In what light then are these utterances to be regarded? They must be viewed as belonging to the dispensation of the Old Testament; they must be estimated from the standpoint of the Law, which was based upon the rule of retaliation, and not of the Gospel, which is animated by the principle of love; they belong to the spirit of Elijah, not of Christ; they use the language of the age which was taught to love its neighbour and hate its enemy (Matt. v. 43)[1].

Our Lord explicitly declared that the old dispensation, though not contrary to the new, was inferior to it; that modes of thought and actions were permitted or even enjoined which would not be allowable for His followers; that He had come to 'fulfil' the Law and the Prophets by raising all to a higher moral and spiritual level, expanding and completing what was rudimentary and imperfect (Matt. v. 43; xix. 8; Luke ix. 55).

It is essential then to endeavour to understand the ruling

[1] It is well to remember, on the other hand, that the Law inculcates service to an enemy (Ex. xxiii. 4, 5), and forbids hatred, vengeance, and bearing of grudges (Lev. xix. 17, 18): and the Book of Proverbs bids men leave vengeance to God (xx. 22), and control their exultation at an enemy's misfortune (xxiv. 17; cp. Job xxxi. 29); and teaches that kindness is the best revenge (xxv. 21, 22). We have here the germ of Christian ethics.

ideas and the circumstances of the age in which these Psalms were composed, in order to realise how, from the point of view of that age, such prayers for vengeance and expressions of triumph as they contain could be regarded as justifiable.

In the first place it is important to observe that they are not dictated merely by private vindictiveness and personal thirst for revenge. While it would perhaps be too much to say that they contain no tinge of human passion (for the Psalmists were men of infirmity, and inspiration does not obliterate personal character), they rise to a far higher level. They spring ultimately from zeal for God's cause, and they express a willingness to leave vengeance in the hands of Him to whom it belongs. Retribution is desired and welcomed as part of the divine order (lviii. 11; civ. 35).

This was a great advance upon the ruder stage of society, in which each man claimed to be his own avenger. David's first impulse when he was insulted by Nabal was to wreak a terrible vengeance upon him and all that belonged to him. It was the natural instinct of the time. But his final resolve to leave vengeance to God indicated the better feeling that was being learnt (1 Sam. xxv. 21 ff., 39).

Though their form belongs to the circumstances and limitations of the age, these invocations of vengeance are the feeling after a truth of the divine government of the world. For it is the teaching of the N.T. not less than of the O.T. that the kingdom of God must come in judgement as well as in grace. Love no less than justice demands that there should be an ultimate distinction between the good and the evil, that those who will not submit to the laws of the kingdom should be banished from it (Matt. xiii. 49, 50; xvi. 27; John v. 29).

But while the Gospel proclaims the law of universal love, and bids men pray without ceasing for the establishment of the kingdom of God by the repentance and reformation even of the most hardened offenders, and leave the issue to the future judgement of God, the Law with its stern principle of retribution and its limitation of view to the present life, allowed men to pray for the establishment of the kingdom of God through the destruction of the wicked.

The Prophets and Psalmists of the O.T. had a keen sense of the great conflict constantly going on between good and evil, between God and His enemies[1]. That conflict was being waged in the world at large between Israel as the people of God and the nations which threatened to destroy Israel. The enemies of Israel were the enemies of Israel's God; Israel's defeat was a reproach to His Name; the cause at stake was not merely the existence of the nation, but the cause of divine truth and righteousness. This aspect of the conflict is most completely expressed in Ps. lxxxiii, and prayers for vengeance such as those of lxxix. 10, 12 and cxxxvii. 8 express the national desire for the vindication of a just cause, and the punishment of cruel insults.

Within the nation of Israel this same conflict was being waged on a smaller scale between the godly and the ungodly. When the righteous were oppressed and the wicked triumphant, it seemed as though God's rule were being set at nought, as though God's cause were losing. It was not only allowable but a duty to pray for its triumph, and that involved the destruction of the wicked who persisted in their wickedness. There must be no half-heartedness or compromise. In hatred as well as in love the man who fears God must be wholly on His side (cxxxix. 19—22). The perfect ruler resolves not only to choose the faithful in the land for his servants, but "morning by morning" to "destroy all the wicked of the land; to cut off all the workers of iniquity from the city of the LORD" (ci. 6—8); and it seemed only right and natural to pray that the Divine Ruler would do the same.

Further light is thrown on the Imprecatory Psalms by the consideration that there was as yet no revelation of a final judgement in which evil will receive its entire condemnation, or of a future state of rewards and punishments (see p. xciii ff.). Men expected and desired to see a present and visible distinction between the righteous and the wicked, according to the law of the divine government (cxxv. 4, 5; cxlv. 20). It was part of God's lovingkindness not less than of His omnipotence to "reward

[1] See Rainy's *Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 346, where there is a helpful treatment of the whole question.

every man according to his work" (lxii. 12). The sufferings of the godly and the prosperity of the ungodly formed one of the severest trials of faith and patience to those whose view was limited to the present life (Ps. xxxvii, lxxiii). Although God's sentence upon evil is constantly being executed in this world, it is often deferred and not immediately visible; and those who longed for the vindication of righteousness desired to have it executed promptly before their eyes. Hence the righteous could rejoice when he saw the wicked destroyed, for it was a manifest proof of the righteous government of Jehovah (lii. 5 ff.; liv. 7; lviii. 10, 11; xcii. 11).

Again, it must be remembered that we have been taught to distinguish between the evil man and evil: to love the sinner while we hate his sin. But Hebrew modes of thought were concrete. The man was identified with his wickedness; the one was a part of the other; they were inseparable. Clearly it was desirable that wickedness should be extirpated. How could this be done except by the destruction of the wicked man? What right had he to exist, if he persisted obstinately in his wickedness and refused to reform (l. 16 ff.)?

The imprecations which appear most terrible to us are those which include a man's kith and kin in his doom (lxix. 25; cix. 9 ff.). In order to estimate them rightly it must be borne in mind that a man's family was regarded as part of him. He lived on in his posterity: the sin of the parent was entailed upon the children: if the offence had been monstrous and abnormal, so ought the punishment to be. The defective conception of the rights of the individual, so justly insisted upon by Professor Mozley as one of the chief 'ruling ideas in early ages,' helps us to understand how not only the guilty man, but all his family, could be devoted to destruction[1].

Let it be noted too that what seems the most awful of all anathemas (lxix. 28) would not have been understood in the extreme sense which we attach to it: and some of the expressions which shock us most by their ferocity are metaphors derived from times of wild and savage warfare (lviii. 10; lxviii. 21 ff.). The noblest thoughts may coexist side by side with

[1] See Mozley's *Lectures on the Old Testament*, pp. 87 ff., 198 ff.

much that to a later age seems wholly barbarous and revolting.

These utterances then belong to the spirit of the O.T. and not of the N.T., and by it they must be judged. They belong to the age in which the martyr's dying prayer was not, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts vii. 60), but, "Jehovah look upon it, and require it" (2 Chron. xxiv. 22). It is impossible that such language should be repeated in its old and literal sense by any follower of Him Who has bidden us to love our enemies and pray for them that persecute us.

Yet these utterances still have their lesson. On the one hand they may make us thankful that we live in the light of the Gospel and under the law of Love: on the other hand they testify to the punishment which the impenitent sinner deserves and must finally receive (Rom. vi. 23). They set an example of moral earnestness, of righteous indignation, of burning zeal for the cause of God. Men have need to beware lest in pity for the sinner they condone the sin, or relax the struggle against evil. The underlying truth is still true, that "the cause of sin shall go down, in the persons of those who maintain it, in such a manner as to throw back on them all the evil they have sought to do....This was waited for with inexpressible longing. It was fit it should be....This is not the only truth bearing on the point; but it is truth, and it was then the present truth[1]". It is in virtue of the truth which they contain that these Psalms can be regarded as 'inspired,' and their position in the records of divine revelation justified. Their fundamental motive and idea is the religious passion for justice; and it was by the Holy Spirit that their writers were taught to discern and grasp this essential truth; but the form in which they clothed their desire for its realisation belonged to the limitations and modes of thought of their particular age.

(iv) *The Future Life.* Death is never regarded in the O. T. as annihilation or the end of personal existence. But it is for the most part contemplated as the end of all that deserves to be called life. Existence continues, but all the joy and vigour of vitality are gone for ever (Is. xiv. 10; Ps. cxliii. 3=Lam. iii. 6).

[1] Rainy, p. 348.

Communion with God is at an end: the dead can no longer "see" Him: they cannot serve or praise Him in the silence of Sheol: His lovingkindness, faithfulness, and righteousness can no longer be experienced there. See Ps. vi. 5; xxx. 9; lxxxviii. 4, 5, 10—12; cxv. 17; Is. xxxviii. 11, 18: and numerous passages in Job, e.g. vii. 9; x. 21 ff.; xiv.

Death is the common lot of all, which none can escape (xlix. 7 ff.; lxxxix. 48), but the righteous and the wicked are distinguished by the manner of their death (lxxiii. 19). When death comes to a man in a good old age, and he leaves his children behind him to keep his name in remembrance, it may be borne with equanimity; but premature death is usually regarded as the sign of God's displeasure and the penal doom of the wicked (xxvi. 9), and childlessness is little better than annihilation.

To the oppressed and persecuted indeed Sheol is a welcome rest (Job iii. 17 ff.), and death may even be a gracious removal from coming evil (Is. lvii. 1, 2); but as a rule death is dreaded as the passage into the monotonous and hopeless gloom of the under-world.

The continuance of existence after death has no moral or religious element in it. It is practically non-existence. The dead man 'is not' (xxxix. 13). It offers neither encouragement nor warning. It brings no solution of the enigmas of the present life. There is no hope of happiness or fear of punishment in the world beyond.

This world was regarded as the scene of recompence and retribution. If reward and punishment did not come to the individual, they might be expected to come to his posterity. For the man lived on in his children: this was his real continuance in life, not the shadowy existence of Sheol: hence the bitterness of childlessness.

Nowhere in the Psalter do we find the hope of a Resurrection from the dead. The prophets speak of a national, and finally of a personal resurrection (Hos. vi. 1 ff.; Is. xxvi. 19; Ezek. xxxvii. 1 ff.; Dan. xii. 2), and predict the final destruction of death (Is. xxv. 8). But just where we should have expected to find such a hope as the ground of consolation, it is conspicuously absent[1].

[1] lvi. 13; lxviii. 20; xc. 3; cxli. 7, which are sometimes referred to,

Indeed it is set on one side as incredible (lxxxviii. 10). It is evident that there was as yet no revelation of a resurrection upon which men could rest; it was no article of the common religious belief to which the faithful naturally turned for comfort[1].

But do we not find that strong souls, at least in rare moments of exultant faith and hope, broke through the veil, and anticipated, not indeed the resurrection of the body, but translation through death into a true life of unending fellowship with God, like Enoch or Elijah?

Do not Pss. xvi, xvii, xlix, lxxiii, plainly speak of the hope of the righteous in his death?

The answer to this question is one of the most difficult problems of the theology of the Psalter. It can only be satisfactorily treated in the detailed exposition of the passages as they stand in their context. Some of the expressions which appear at first sight to imply a sure hope of deliverance from Sheol and of reception into the more immediate presence of God (e.g. xlix. 15, lxxiii. 24) are used elsewhere of temporal deliverance from death or protection from danger, and may mean no more than this (ix. 13, xviii. 16, xxx. 3, lxxxvi. 13, ciii. 4, cxxxviii. 7). Reading these passages in the light of fuller revelation we may easily assign to them a deeper and more precise meaning than their original authors and hearers understood. They adapt themselves so readily to Christian hope that we are easily led to believe that it was there from the first.

Unquestionably these Psalms (xvi, xvii, xlix, lxxiii) do contain the germ and principle of the doctrine of eternal life. It was present to the mind of the Spirit Who inspired their authors. The intimate fellowship with God of which they speak as man's highest good and truest happiness could not, in view of the nature and destiny of man and his relation to God, continue to be regarded as limited to this life and liable to sudden and final interruption. (See Matt. xxii. 31 ff.). It re-

cannot be interpreted of a resurrection. The text of xlviii. 14 is very uncertain; lxxxvi. 13 is a thanksgiving for deliverance from death; cxviii. 17 expresses the hope of such a deliverance.

[1] Contrast the precise statements in the *Psalms of Solomon* quoted on p. xlix, where however it is only a resurrection of the righteous which is anticipated.

quired but a step forward to realise the truth of its permanence, but whether the Psalmists took this step is doubtful.

But even if they did, there was still no clear and explicit revelation on which the doctrine of a future life or of a resurrection could be based. It was but a 'postulate of faith,' a splendid hope, a personal and individual conclusion.

What was the meaning and purpose of this reserve in the teaching of the O. T.? Mankind had to be trained through long ages by this stern discipline to know the bitterness of death as the punishment of sin, and to trust God utterly in spite of all appearances. They had to be profoundly impressed with a sense of need and of the incompleteness of life here, in order that they might long for deliverance from this bondage and welcome it when it came (Heb. ii. 15). Nor could the revelation of the Resurrection and eternal life be made in fulness and certainty (so far as we can see) otherwise than through the victory of the second Adam who through death overcame death and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life (1 Cor. xv. 21 ff.).

Yet, as Delitzsch observes, there is nothing which comes to light in the New Testament which does not already exist in germ in the Psalms. The ideas of death and life are regarded by the Psalmists in their fundamental relation to the wrath and the love of God, in such a way that it is easy for Christian faith to appropriate and deepen, in the light of fuller revelation, all that is said of them in the Psalms. There is no contradiction of the Psalmist's thought, when the Christian as he prays substitutes hell for Sheol in such a passage as vi. 5, for the Psalmist dreaded Sheol only as the realm of wrath and separation from the love of God, which is the true life of man. Nor is there anything contrary to the mind of the authors in the application of xvii. 15 to the future vision of the face of God in all its glory, or of xlix. 14 to the Resurrection morning; for the hopes there expressed in moments of spiritual elevation can only find their full satisfaction in the world to come. The faint glimmerings of twilight in the eschatological darkness of the Old Testament are the first rays of the coming sunrise. And the Christian cannot refrain from passing beyond the

limits of the Psalmists, and understanding the Psalms according to the mind of the Spirit, whose purpose in the gradual revelation of salvation was ever directed towards the final consummation. Thus understood, the Psalms belong to the Israel of the New Testament not less than of the Old Testament.

The Church, in using the Psalms for its prayers, recognises the unity of the two Testaments: and scholarship, in expounding the Psalms, gives full weight to the difference between them. Both are right; the former in regarding the Psalms in the light of the one unchanging salvation, the latter in distinguishing the different periods and steps in which that salvation was historically revealed[1].

The sacred poetry of heathen religions, in spite of all that it contains of noble aspiration and pathetic "feeling after God," has ceased to be a living power. But "the Psalms of those far distant days, the early utterances of their faith and love, still form the staple of the worship and devotion of the Christian Church"... "The Vedic hymns are dead remains, known in their real spirit and meaning to a few students. The Psalms are as living as when they were written....They were composed in an age at least as immature as that of the singers of the Veda; but they are now what they have been for thirty centuries, the very life of spiritual religion—they suit the needs, they express, as nothing else can express, the deepest religious ideas of 'the foremost in the files of time.'[2]"

[1] Delitzsch, *The Psalms*, p. 63.

[2] Dean Church, *The Sacred Poetry of Early Religions*, pp. 12, 38.

CHAPTER X.

THE PSALTER IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

If a history of the use of the Psalter could be written, it would be a history of the spiritual life of the Church. From the earliest times the Psalter has been the Church's manual of Prayer and Praise in its public worship, the treasury of devotion for its individual members in their private communing with God. "No single Book of Scripture, not even of the New Testament, has, perhaps, ever taken such hold on the *heart* of Christendom. None, if we may dare judge, unless it be the Gospels, has had so large an influence in moulding the affections, sustaining the hopes, purifying the faith of believers. With its words, rather than with their own, they have come before God. In these they have uttered their desires, their fears, their confessions, their aspirations, their sorrows, their joys, their thanksgivings. By these their devotion has been kindled and their hearts comforted. The Psalter has been, in the truest sense, the Prayer Book both of Jews and Christians[1]."

"What is the history of the Church," writes Dean Stanley, "but a long commentary on the sacred records of its first beginnings?...The actual effect, the manifold applications, in history, of the words of Scripture, give them a new instruction, and afford a new proof of their endless vigour and vitality.... The Psalter alone, by its manifold applications and uses in after times, is a vast palimpsest, written over and over again, illuminated, illustrated, by every conceivable incident and emotion of men and nations; battles, wanderings, dangers, escapes, deathbeds, obsequies, of many ages and countries, rise, or may rise, to our view as we read it[2]."

It would be impossible in a few pages to trace the history of the use of the Psalter even in the barest outline. All that can

[1] Bishop Perowne, *The Psalms*, p. 22.
[2] Stanley, *The Eastern Church*, pp. lxxiv, lxxv.

be attempted here is to give some few indications of the vast influence which the Psalter has exercised, and of its paramount importance in the history of Christian worship and devotion.

There is no evidence that the entire Psalter was used in the public worship of the Jewish Church, though many Psalms were sung or chanted in the services of the Temple and the Synagogue[1]. But the number of the quotations from the Psalter in the New Testament, and the multitude of indirect allusions to its thoughts and language, prove how familiarly it was known in the apostolic age.

It was upon the Psalms that our Lord's spiritual life was nourished. The sting of the Tempter's quotation of Ps. xci lay in the fact that its words were a precious reality to Him. He sang the 'Hallel' (Pss. cxiii—cxviii) with His disciples at the Last Supper (Matt. xxvi. 30). A Psalm was the subject of His meditation as He hung upon the Cross, and with the words of a Psalm He gave up His life. In the Psalms He and His disciples found the foreshadowing of His own experience (John xiii. 18; ii. 17), and He taught His disciples to understand how they prepared the way for His coming (Luke xxiv. 44). The first Christian hymns—the Magnificat, Benedictus, and Nunc Dimittis—are composed after the model of Psalms and contain numerous echoes of them. Doubtless the hymns which Paul and Silas sang in the prison at Philippi (Acts xvi. 25) were Psalms. St James commends the singing of Psalms as the most fitting expression of joyfulness (v. 13); St Paul enjoins it as the natural outlet for spiritual enthusiasm and a means of mutual edification (Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16). It was a common practice at the meetings of the Corinthian Church (1 Cor. xiv. 26).

As we pass on into later ages we find that the singing of Psalms was not only a constant element of common worship, but a favourite occupation of Christians in their homes and at their work. It was a tradition in the Church of Antioch that the antiphonal singing of Psalms was introduced by Ignatius, the first bishop (c. A.D. 100), who saw a vision of angels praising the Trinity in antiphonal hymns, and delivered the method of

[1] For the daily Psalms see above p. xxvii.

singing which he had seen in his vision to the Church at Antioch, whence it spread to all the Churches[1]. The hymns from Holy Scripture which Tertullian in the second century tells us were sung at the *agapae* or love-feasts were doubtless Psalms[2]. St Jerome, writing from Bethlehem to Marcella[3], and describing the charms of the Holy Land, tells her that the singing of Psalms was universal. "Wherever you turn the labourer at the plough sings Alleluia: the toiling reaper beguiles his work with Psalms: the vine-dresser as he prunes the vine with his curved pruning-hook sings something of David's. These are the songs of this province: these, to use the common phrase, are its love ditties: these the shepherd whistles; these are the labourer's implements."

St Chrysostom[4] (347—407) thus describes the universality of the use of the Psalms in his day. "If we keep vigil in the Church, David comes first, last, and midst. If early in the morning we seek for the melody of hymns, first, last, and midst is David again. If we are occupied with the funeral solemnities of the departed, if virgins sit at home and spin, David is first, last, and midst[5]. O marvellous wonder! Many who have made but little progress in literature, many who have scarcely mastered its first principles, have the Psalter by heart. Nor is it in cities and churches alone that at all times, through every age, David is illustrious; in the midst of the forum, in the wilderness, and uninhabitable land, he excites the praises of God. In monasteries, amongst those holy choirs of angelic armies, David is first, midst, and last. In the convents of virgins, where are the bands of them that imitate Mary; in the deserts, where are men crucified to this world, and having their conversation with God, first, midst, and last is he. All other men are at night overpowered by natural sleep: David alone is

[1] Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.*, vi. 8.
[2] Tert. *Apol.* c. 39.
[3] Ep. xlvi.
[4] Quoted in Neale and Littledale, *Comm. on the Psalms*, p. 1.
[5] St Chrysostom is referring to that stanza of Theognis,

ἀλλ' *aiei* πρῶτόν τε καὶ ὕστατον, ἔν τε μέσοισιν
ἀείσω· σὺ δέ μευ κλῦθι, καὶ ἐσθλὰ δίδου.

active; and congregating the servants of God into seraphic bands, turns earth into heaven, and converts men into angels."

When men and women, forsaking their ordinary callings, dedicated their lives to devotion and prayer in monasteries and communities, the singing of Psalms formed a large part of their religious exercises. In course of time the recitation of the Psalter became a clerical obligation as well. Various schemes or uses were drawn up. Fixed Psalms were generally assigned to certain of the canonical hours, while at the other services the remainder of the Psalms were recited 'in course.' Thus according to the Roman or Gregorian scheme fixed Psalms were assigned for daily use at Lauds, Prime, Tierce, Sext, Nones, and Compline; while at Mattins Pss. i—cix, and at Vespers Pss. cx—cl were taken once a week 'in course,' exclusive of the Psalms assigned to the other services. The Benedictine or Monastic scheme was similar, also providing for the recitation once a week of those Psalms which were not recited daily. The Ambrosian scheme, deriving its origin from St Ambrose, and still in use in the province of Milan, only provides for the recitation of the Psalter once a fortnight. In the Eastern Church the Psalter is divided into twenty *cathismata*, each of which is subdivided into three *staseis*. The whole Psalter is recited once a week ordinarily, and twice a week in Lent, but the details of the arrangement vary according to the time of year[1].

In this way a portion of the Psalms nearly equal in amount to twice the whole Psalter was recited every week. But many instances are quoted of holy men who recited it much more frequently. It is said that St Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland, in the fifth century, repeated it daily; St Maurus, the disciple of St Benedict, and Alcuin, the famous instructor of Charles the Great, did the same. St Kentigern, bishop of Glasgow, in the sixth century, went through it every night. Bede relates how Ecgbert, a young student of noble birth at an Irish monastery,

[1] For full details consult *The Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, art. *Psalmody*, or the *Introduction* to Neale and Littledale's *Commentary on the Psalms*, ch. i. *The Prayer Book Interleaved* has some clear tables, and also an account by the late Dr Schiller-Szinessy of the recital of the Psalms according to the modern Jewish use (p. 255).

when attacked by the plague, vowed that if he recovered he would recite the whole Psalter daily in addition to the ordinary canonical hours, as a memorial of praise to God[1].

A knowledge of the Psalter by heart was required of candidates for ordination. St Gennadius, Patriarch of Constantinople (A.D. 458—471), refused to ordain as priest anyone who had not been diligent in reciting the Psalter. St Gregory the Great inquired if Rusticus, who had been elected Bishop of Ancona, knew the Psalter by heart, and refused to allow John the Presbyter to be consecrated as metropolitan of Ravenna on account of his ignorance of the Psalter. The second Canon of the second Council of Nicaea (A.D. 587) laid it down that no one was to be consecrated bishop unless he knew the Psalter thoroughly, and the eighth Council of Toledo (A.D. 653) ordered that "no one henceforth shall be promoted to any ecclesiastical dignity who does not perfectly know the whole Psalter" (Can. 8).

Various methods of singing the Psalms were in use in ancient times[2]. (1) Sometimes the Psalm was sung throughout by the choir or congregation. This was called *cantus directaneus*, and was the simplest form of singing with little more than monotone. (2) Sometimes the Psalm was sung by a single voice, usually in a very elaborate fashion. This was called *cantus tractus*. (3) Sometimes the Psalm was sung in *cantus responsorius*, the precentor and the choir or the congregation taking their parts alternately. (4) Sometimes the Psalm was sung in *cantus antiphonalis*, the two sides of the choir taking it up alternately. The following passage of St Chrysostom (*Hom.* v) is of interest as shewing the congregational character of the singing in his day, and emphasising its significance. "When the Psalm began, it mingled all the different voices together, and one harmonious song was raised. Young and old, rich and poor, women and men, slaves and freemen, all raised the same melody. ...But it not only united us who were present; it joined the dead with the living. For the blessed Prophet was singing with us....The Prophet speaks and we all answer, we all re-

[1] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 27.

[2] See Neale and Littledale's *Commentary*, p. 58; Proctor and Frere, *New History of the Book of Common Prayer*, p. 345.

spond. You can see no distinction of slave or free, rich or poor, ruler or subject. The inequalities of life are banished; all are united in one choir, all have equal right of speech, and earth imitates Heaven. So great is the nobility of the Church."

The voices of holy men in every age unite in bearing a concordant testimony to the power and preciousness of the Psalms. A few examples only can be given here.

St Athanasius, in his *Epistle to Marcellinus on the Interpretation of the Psalms*, the whole of which well deserves study, writes thus:

"They seem to me to be a kind of mirror for everyone who sings them, in which he may observe the motions of the soul, and as he observes them give utterance to them in words. He who hears them read, takes them as if they were spoken specially for him. Stricken in his conscience he repents, or hearing of hope in God, and of the grace which is given to those who believe, he rejoices as if this grace were promised to him in particular, and begins to thank God....He who genuinely studies all that is written in this book of Divine inspiration may gather, as out of a paradise, that which is serviceable for his own need. Methinks that in the words of this book you may find an accurate survey and delineation of the whole life of man, the dispositions of the soul, and the movements of the mind. If a man has need of penitence and confession, if affliction or temptation has overtaken him, if he has been persecuted or has been delivered from the plots of his enemies, if he is in sorrow or trouble, or if he wishes to praise and give thanks and bless the Lord, he finds instruction in the Psalms....If thou meditate on these things and study the Psalms, thou shalt be able, under the guidance of the Spirit, to grasp their meaning; and thou shalt emulate the life of the divinely inspired men who uttered these words."

From Alexandria let us pass to Cappadocia, and listen to the eloquent words of St Basil, in the introduction to his Homily on the First Psalm:

"All Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable, for it was written by the Spirit to the end that as it were in a general hospital for souls, we human beings might each select the

medicine for his own disease....The prophets provide one kind of instruction, the historians another, the law yet another, and the exhortations of the Proverbs yet another. But the Book of Psalms contains that which is profitable in all of them. It prophesies of the future; it recalls history; it legislates for life; it suggests rules of action; in a word, it is a common storehouse of good doctrines, providing exactly what is expedient for everyone....A Psalm is the calm of souls, the arbiter of peace: it stills the stormy waves of thought. It softens the angry spirit, and sobers the intemperate. A Psalm cements friendship: it unites those who are at variance; it reconciles those who are at enmity. For who can regard as an enemy the man with whom he has joined in lifting up one voice to God? Psalmody therefore provides the greatest of all good things, even love, for it has invented concerted singing as a bond of unity, and fits the people together in the concord of one choir. A Psalm puts demons to flight: it summons the angels to our aid; it is a weapon in the midst of alarms by night, a rest from the toils of day; it is a safeguard for babes, a decoration for adults, a comfort for the aged, a most befitting ornament for women. It makes deserts populous and market-places sane. It is an initiation to novices, growth to those who are advancing, confirmation to those who are being perfected. It is the voice of the Church; it gladdens festivals, it creates godly sorrow. For a Psalm calls forth tears even from a stony heart. A Psalm is the employment of angels, heavenly converse, spiritual incense....What mayest thou not learn thence? The heroism of courage; the integrity of justice; the gravity of temperance; the perfection of prudence; the manner of repentance; the measure of patience; in a word every good thing thou canst mention. Therein is a complete theology; the prediction of the advent of Christ in the flesh, the threatening of judgement, the hope of resurrection, the fear of chastisement, promises of glory, revelations of mysteries: all, as in some great public storehouse, are treasured up in the Book of Psalms[1]."

[1] This passage seems to have been in Hooker's mind when he wrote the well-known words quoted on p. viii.

In a well-known passage of his *Confessions* (ix. 4), St Augustine describes the comfort which he derived from the Psalms in the interval before his baptism.

"In what accents I addressed Thee, my God, when I read the Psalms of David, those faithful songs, the language of devotion which banishes the spirit of pride, while I was still a novice in true love of Thee, and as a catechumen rested in that country house along with Alypius, who was also a catechumen, with my mother at our side, in the dress of a woman but with the faith of a man, with the calmness of age, the affection of a mother, the piety of a Christian. How I addressed Thee in those Psalms! how my love for Thee was kindled by them! how I burned to recite them, were it possible, throughout the world, as an antidote to the pride of humanity. Yet they are sung throughout the world, and there is none that hideth himself from Thy heat[1]. How grieved and indignant was I with the Manichaeans[2]! and yet again I pitied them for their ignorance of those sacraments, those medicines, and their mad rejection of the antidote which might have cured them of their madness. Would that they could have been somewhere near me without my knowledge and watched my face and heard my voice when I read the Fourth Psalm in that time of leisure, and have known the effect of that Psalm upon me. Would that they could have heard what I uttered between the words of the Psalm, without my knowing that they heard...how I spoke with myself and to myself before Thee out of the inmost feelings of my soul. I trembled for fear, and then I became fervent with hope and rejoicing in Thy mercy, O Father. And all these feelings issued forth by my eyes and voice..."

The interpretation of the Psalm and the application of it to his own circumstances which follow are fanciful and far-fetched, but they shew how his heart glowed with fervour as he read, and how he found the Psalms "sweetened with heavenly honey, and luminous with the light of God."

Luther and Calvin represent the revival of the study of the Bible in the age of the Reformation.

[1] An allusion to Ps. xix. 6.

[2] Who deprived themselves of the Psalms by rejecting the O. T.

Luther speaks thus of the Psalter, which he found inexpressibly precious in the trials and conflicts of his stormy life:

"You may rightly call the Psalter a Bible in miniature, in which all things which are set forth more at length in the rest of the Scriptures are collected into a beautiful manual of wonderful and attractive brevity. From the Psalms you may learn not the works of the saints only, but the words, the utterances, the groans, the colloquies, which they used in the presence of God, in temptation and in consolation; so that though they are dead, in the Psalms they live and speak. The Psalms exhibit the mind of the saints; they express the hidden treasure of their hearts, the working of their thoughts, and their most secret feelings[1]."

"This book," says Calvin, in the *Epistle to his Readers* prefixed to his commentary, "I am wont to call an anatomy of all the parts of the soul; for no one will find in himself a single feeling of which the image is not reflected in this mirror. Here the Holy Spirit has represented to the life all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, anxieties, in short, all the stormy emotions, by which human minds are wont to be agitated. The rest of Scripture contains the commands which God gave His servants to be delivered to us. Here the prophets themselves, in their converse with God, because they lay bare all their inmost feelings, invite or compel every one of us to examine himself, that none of all the infirmities to which we are subject may remain hidden. It is a rare and singular advantage when every secret recess is laid open, and the heart purged from the foul plague of hypocrisy and brought out to light."

One quotation from a modern writer must suffice. With profound insight and unrivalled delicacy of touch the late Dean Church thus describes the Psalms and their work[2]:

"In the Psalms we see the soul in the secret of its workings, in the variety and play of its many-sided and subtly compounded nature—loving, hoping, fearing, despairing, exulting, repenting, aspiring—the soul, conscious of the greatness and sweetness of

[1] *Works*, ed. 1553, Vol. iii. p. 356.
[2] *The Discipline of the Christian Character*, pp. 53 ff.

its relations to Almighty God, and penetrated by them to the very quick; longing, thirsting, gasping, after the glimpses that visit it, of His goodness and beauty—awestruck before the unsearchableness of His judgement, silent before the certainty of His righteousness—opening, like a flower to the sun, in the presence of His light, of the immensity of His lovingkindness".....It has been the work of the Book of Psalms to teach devotion, worship, self-knowledge. "They bring before us in all its fulness and richness the devotional element of the religious character. They are the first great teachers and patterns of prayer, and they shew this side of the religious character...in varied and finished detail, in all its compass and living and spontaneous force....The tongue is loosed to give utterance out of the abundance of the heart, to every mood, every contrasted feeling of the changeful human mind. From all the hidden depths, from all the strange and secret consciousnesses of the awakened and enlightened soul, spring up unexpected and vivid words, in which generation after generation has found the counterpart of its own convictions and hopes and joys, its own fears and distresses and perplexities and doubts, its own confidence and its own sorrow, its own brightest and darkest hours. This immense variety of mood and subject and occasion, with which the reverence and hope of worship are always combined, is a further point in the work of the Book of Psalms. It is a vast step in the revealing of man to man. We know how much we owe of the knowledge of ourselves to the great dramatists, to the great lyrical poets, to the great novelists. Such, in the unfolding to man of all that is really and most deeply involved in the religious character, is the place of the Book of Psalms."

Luther, as we have seen, calls the Psalms "a Bible in miniature"; and the words which Coleridge uses of the whole Bible may most truly be applied to the Psalms. In them we find copious sources of truth, and power, and purifying impulses; words for our inmost thoughts, songs for our joy, utterances for our hidden griefs, pleadings for our shame and our feebleness. And whatever *finds* us bears witness for itself that it has proceeded from a Holy Spirit, even from the same Spirit, *which*

in all ages entering into holy souls maketh them friends of God and prophets[1].

CHAPTER XI.

LITERATURE.

The literature on the Psalter is enormous, and only a few of the most important and useful works can be mentioned here. An interesting sketch of the history of the exposition of the Psalms will be found in § ix of the *Introduction* to Delitzsch's *Commentary*.

St Athanasius' *Letter to Marcellinus on the Interpretation of the Psalms* is worthy of its author. It treats of the character and value of the Psalms, classifies them, and indicates how they may be used in the various experiences of life. The most famous Greek commentary on the Psalms is the *Homilies* of St Chrysostom. It was complete, but only the Homilies upon 58 Psalms are now extant. The corresponding work in the Western Church is the *Enarrationes in Psalmos* of St Augustine, expositions of the Psalms for the most part actually delivered, the 32 discourses on Ps. cxix forming an exception. It became the great authority from which subsequent writers drew freely.

Medieval expositors followed in the track of the ancient Fathers. The literal meaning was neglected, mystical and allegorical exegesis was predominant. Dependence on the imperfect Greek and Latin Versions often led them far astray, and the absence of any restraint to the luxuriance of their imagination lays them open to the charge of "making anything out of anything." But the patristic and medieval commentaries are rich in beautiful thought, profound spiritual instruction, and practical application.

To the Jewish commentators of the Middle Ages we owe a great debt. They preserved the tradition of the meaning of the Hebrew language, which had been entirely neglected

[1] Coleridge's *Letters on the Inspiration of the Scriptures*, Letter i.

in the Christian Church, and to them the scholars of the 16th century turned when the study of the original text was revived. Chief among them were Raschi (R. Solomon Isaaki) of Troyes (d. A.D. 1105), Aben Ezra of Toledo (d. A.D. 1167), and David Kimchi of Narbonne (d. about A.D. 1235)[1].

The most important works of the Reformation period were those of Luther, who lectured and wrote much on the Psalms, and Calvin, whose Commentary (1567) marked a new departure in the combination of sound exegesis with practical application. Poole's *Synopsis Criticorum*, an abridgment of the *Critici Sacri* published in 1660 in London under the direction of Bishop Pearson and others, is a convenient summary of the opinions of scholars of the 16th and 17th centuries. Martin Geier's voluminous work (1668) is one of the best productions of the 17th century.

Rosenmüller's *Scholia* (1798—1804, 2nd ed. of the Psalms 1821—23) may be said to mark the transition to the modern period. It is mainly a compilation from older works, and is still valuable, especially for its copious citation of Jewish authorities and for its comments on the renderings of the LXX and other Versions. Among modern German Commentaries those of H. Ewald, H. Hupfeld, F. Delitzsch, and F. Baethgen, are the most generally useful. Ewald's *Commentary* in *The Poets of the O.T.* (1836, 3rd ed. 1866, translated in the Theol. Transl. Fund Library, 1880) is distinguished by "intense poetic and religious sympathy, and by a keen and discriminating historical imagination." Hupfeld's work (1855—62, 2nd ed. with additions by Riehm, 1867—71, 3rd ed., revised by Nowack, 1888) is serviceable for its careful investigation of the meaning of the language. Delitzsch (1867, 5th ed. 1894, translation from the 4th ed. by Eaton, 1887), if sometimes fanciful, is always reverent, and constantly penetrates to the deeper meaning. Baethgen, in the *Handkommentar zum A.T.* (1892, 2nd ed. 1897), represents a newer school of critics, without the extravagances which unfortunately disfigure the work of some of them.

[1] The commentary of Raschi is accessible to those who do not know Rabbinic Hebrew in the Latin translation of J. F. Breithaupt (1710); that of Kimchi in the Latin translation of A. Janvier (1566).

Other German commentaries are those of F. Hitzig, 1835, completely revised edition, 1863–5; A. Tholuck, *Uebersetzung und Auslegung der Psalmen für Geistliche und Laien der christlichen Kirche*, 1843, 2nd ed. 1873; J. Olshausen in the *Kurzgef. exeg. Handbuch*, 1853; H. Grätz, *Kritischer Commentar zu den Psalmen*, 1882, (gives much interesting information from Jewish sources, but emends the text too freely): F. W. Schultz in the *Kurzgef. Kommentar*, 1888, replaced by that of H. Kessler, 1899; B. Duhm in the *Kurzer Hand-Commentar*, 1899 (trenchant and often suggestive, but shewing little appreciation of either the poetical or the religious worth of the Psalms).

Among French commentaries may be mentioned that of E. Reuss, 1879, *Le Psautier, ou le Livre de Cantiques de la Synagogue* (strongly advocating the national interpretation of the Psalms).

At the head of English commentaries stands that of Bishop Perowne, *The Book of Psalms, a new Translation, with Introductions and Notes, explanatory and critical* (1864, 8th ed. 1892), which marks an epoch in the exegesis of the O.T. in England. W. Kay, *The Psalms with Notes*, 1871, 2nd ed. 1874, contains much that is instructive. T. K. Cheyne, *The Book of Psalms, A new Translation with Commentary*, 1888, is fresh and suggestive. A. Maclaren's *Exposition*, in the *Expositor's Bible*, 1893–94, is vigorous and practical.

Among many other commentaries the following may be mentioned: J. M. Neale and R. F. Littledale, *A Commentary on the Psalms from Primitive and Medieval Writers*, 4th ed. 1884 (useful for the dissertation on *The Psalms as employed in the Offices of the Church*, and as giving an insight into the methods of patristic and medieval interpretation which have exercised such a wide influence)[1]: *The Psalms Chronologically arranged, by Four Friends*, 1867, 2nd ed. 1891 (based upon Ewald): F. C. Cook, G. H. S. Johnson and C. J. Elliott, in *The*

[1] The Dissertation on *The Mystical and Literal Interpretation of the Psalms* at p. 429 of Vol. i should not be overlooked by those who wish to understand, if they cannot follow, a method of interpretation which has had such a wide currency and still has a strong attraction for many minds.

Speaker's Commentary, 1873: A. C. Jennings and W. H. Lowe, *The Psalms with Introduction and Critical Notes*, 1875–7: C H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 1870–85 (containing, besides his own exposition, a copious collection of extracts from various writers, especially the Puritans): A. S. Aglen, in Bp Ellicott's *O.T. Comm. for English Readers*, 1884 (contains many interesting illustrations from English literature): Bishop Barry, in *The Teacher's Prayer Book*. E. G. King, *The Psalms in Three Collections, translated with notes*, 1898, 1902: C. G. Montefiore, *The Book of Psalms*, 1901 (from *The Bible for Home Reading*).

Among books and articles bearing on the study of the Psalms the following may be mentioned. J. G. von Herder, *vom Geist der Ebr. Poesie*, 1782–3: Isaac Taylor, *The Spirit of the Hebrew Poetry:* Archbishop Alexander, Bampton Lectures for 1876, *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, 2nd ed. 1878: T. K. Cheyne, Bampton Lectures for 1889, *The Origin and Religious Contents of the Psalter in the Light of Old Testament Criticism and the History of Religions*, 1891: J. Sharpe, *The Student's Handbook to the Psalms*, 2nd ed., 1894: W. T. Davison, *The Praises of Israel*, 1893, 2nd ed., 1897 (a brightly written introduction to the study of the Psalms): J. Robertson, *Poetry and Religion of the Psalms*, 1898: W. Robertson Smith, *The O. T. in the Jewish Church*, Lect. vii. R. W. Church, *The Sacred Poetry of Early Religions* (published separately, and also in *The Gifts of Civilisation*), also Sermon iii in *The Discipline of the Christian Character*: A. Neubauer, *On the Titles of the Psalms according to early Jewish Authorities*, in *Studia Biblica*, Vol. ii, 1890: C. Ehrt, *Abfassungszeit und Abschluss des Psalters zur Prüfung der Frage nach Makkabäerpsalmen historisch-kritisch untersucht*, 1869: M. Kopfstein, *Die Asaph-Psalmen untersucht*, 1881: R. Smend, *Ueber das Ich der Psalmen*, Z.A.T.W. 1888, pp. 49—147, on the question Who is the speaker in the Psalms? discussed very fully and more moderately by G. Beer, *Individual- und Gemeinde-Psalmen*, 1894: B. Stade, *Die Messianische Hoffnung im Psalter*, Zeitschr. f. Theol. u. Kirche, 1892, pp. 369 ff.: J. Wellhausen, in Haupt's *Sacred Books of the O.T.*, text 1895, English translation (by

H. H. Furness) with explanatory notes and an Appendix on the Music of the Ancient Hebrews, 1898: cp. *Skizzen u. Vorarbeiten*, vi. 163.

Much interesting illustrative matter on the use of the Psalms is to be found in J. Ker's *The Psalms in History and Biography*, 1888, A. S. Dyer's *Psalm-Mosaics*, 1894, and most fully and attractively in R. E. Prothero's *The Psalms in Human Life*, 1904: comp. § i of the *Introduction* to Tholuck's commentary, and ch. ii of the *Introd.* to Bp Perowne's commentary.

The Paragraph Psalter, by Bp Westcott, 1879, contains a suggestive marginal analysis. S. R. Driver, *The Parallel Psalter, being the Prayer Book Version of the Psalms, and a New Version, with an Introduction and Glossaries*, (on the origin and history of the Prayer Book Psalter, and explaining characteristic words and archaisms). A convenient Parallel Psalter containing P.B.V., A.V., and R.V. in parallel columns, is published by the Camb. Univ. Press. The Wycliffite Version of Nicholas de Hereford and John Purvey is accessible in a reprint from Forshall and Madden's edition, published by the Clarendon Press, 1881: and the original of the Prayer Book Version is reproduced in J. Earle's *The Psalter of the Great Bible of* 1539, *a Landmark in English Literature, with Introduction and Notes*, 1894. On the Metrical Versions of the Psalter consult Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology*, and H. A. Glass, *The Story of the Psalters*, 1888.

To the commentaries mentioned above may now (1906) be added those of W. T. Davison in *The Century Bible*, 1904; W. F. Cobb, *The Book of Psalms with Introduction and Notes*, 1905; C. A. Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Book of Psalms*, 1906, in *The International Critical Commentary* (full and elaborate, devoting special attention to metrical structure, and editorial changes).

Quis audeat praesumere unum Psalmum rotunde ab ullo intellectum? Vita nostra initium et profectus est non consummatio.—LUTHER.

THE PSALMS.

BOOK IV.

PSALMS XC—CVI.

PSALM XC.

THIS Psalm consists of three divisions.

i. It is to Jehovah alone that Israel can appeal in their distress, though He seems to have forsaken them. He has proved Himself their refuge in each succeeding age: He alone is the Eternal God: the lives of men are at His sovereign disposal (1—6).

ii. The brief and uncertain span of life is being spent by the Psalmist and his contemporaries under the cloud of Jehovah's wrath for their sins. Few indeed lay the lesson to heart: O that He would teach them wisdom (7—12).

iii. O that He would relent and return to His people, and once more manifesting Himself in His saving Majesty, bless them with renewed prosperity (13—17).

The first two divisions of the Psalm lead up to the prayer for the restoration of God's favour to Israel, which is its main purpose. The brevity of human life—appearing still more brief in comparison with Divine Eternity—is pleaded, as in lxxxix. 46 ff., as a ground for the speedier exhibition of mercy. Must generation after generation pass away without seeing the proofs of God's love? But with all its plaintive tone of sadness, the Psalm betrays no trace of murmuring or impatience. It breathes a spirit of perfect submission to the Will of God. The faith which appeals unwaveringly to the God Who is chastening Israel for their sins; the resignation which accepts the transitoriness of human life as God's decree, while it ventures tacitly to accentuate its sadness by contrasting it with His Eternity; the deep humility of the confession that it is for its sins that Israel is suffering; the earnestness of the prayer for the dawn of a brighter day in the renewal of God's favour; all combine to stamp the Psalm as the utterance of a poet-seer who had learnt profound lessons of spiritual truth through the discipline of suffering.

Can that poet-seer have been Moses, as the title seems to affirm? The Psalm is worthy of him, and at first sight its contemplation of the transitoriness of human life, its acknowledgement of suffering as the punishment of sin, and its prayer for the restoration of God's favour, seem appropriate enough to a time towards the close of the Wandering in the wilderness, and a natural utterance for the leader who had watched one generation of Israelites after another dying out for their faithless murmuring. But a closer consideration of the Psalm makes it difficult if not impossible to suppose that it was actually written by Moses. No weight is to be attached to the argument that the average length of life spoken of in *v.* 10 is not that of the Mosaic age, for the longer lives of Moses and other leaders may have been exceptional; and the absence of distinct reference to the circumstances of the Israelites in the prayer of *vv.* 13—17 might be accounted for by the general character of poetical language. But the author appears to look back upon a long period of national existence (*v.* 1); and it is difficult to imagine that the leader of a great nation, at the outset of its national existence, when it was on the

point of taking possession of the inheritance promised to it, could possibly have expressed himself in the language of *vv.* 13—17. Its subdued tone is not that of one who is looking forward to a future rich in vast possibilities.

It has been urged in defence of the Mosaic authorship of the Psalm that it presents many points of resemblance in thought and language to the Book of Deuteronomy. The argument would not be conclusive, even if the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy were undisputed, for the resemblances might be fully accounted for by the Psalmist's familiarity with that book. But if, as is now generally held, Deuteronomy in its present form is far later than the time of Moses, the Deuteronomic language of the Psalm points to a later date than the Mosaic age.

To what period then may it be assigned? Probably to the time of the Exile. Its position in the Psalter is in favour of this view. It breathes the feelings of that period as they are expressed in Ps. lxxxix. 46 ff., and it finds a striking parallel in Lam. v. 16—22.

How then came it to have the name of Moses prefixed to it? Possibly this was done by the compiler, who noticed the resemblance of the Psalm to Deuteronomy, and thought, as many have thought since, that it suited the situation of the Israelites in the wilderness. Possibly, as even Delitzsch admits is conceivable, it was written by some gifted poet to express what he conceived to be Moses' feelings. This he might have done in all good faith, without any intention of claiming the authority of Moses for his own composition: and in doing it, he may have, consciously or unconsciously, reflected the circumstances and expressed the feelings of his own times.

Happily the sublimity and pathos of this Psalm are wholly independent of the question of its date and authorship. Its use in the Burial Service gives it an additional solemnity of association; and it will not be forgotten that one of the finest hymns in the English language—Dr Watts's "O God, our help in ages past,"—is based upon it.

For the title *A Prayer* cp. the titles of xvii; lxxxvi; cii; cxlii; and the subscription to lxxii; and see *Introd.* p. xv. *Man of God* is a title of honour, applied to Moses (Deut. xxxiii. 1; Josh. xiv. 6), and to other prophets and messengers of God, to express the close relation of fellowship in which they stood to Him.

A Prayer of Moses the man of God.

90 Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

1—6. The Psalmist's confession that God is Israel's refuge; that He alone is the Eternal; that He is the sovereign Disposer of human life.

1. *Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place*] The Psalmist addresses God not by the covenant Name Jehovah (LORD), but by the title which designates Him as the Ruler of the world. He not merely is, but has proved Himself to be, Israel's home, age after age, in all the vicissitudes of its history. The same word is used in xci. 9 (A.V. *habitation*), and

Before the mountains were brought forth,
Or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou *art* God.
Thou turnest man to destruction;
And sayest, Return, ye children of men.
For a thousand years in thy sight

(in a slightly different form) in Deut. xxxiii. 27, to which the Psalmist may be alluding. Some editors would change *mā'ōn*, 'dwelling-place,' into *mā'ōz*, 'stronghold.' In lxxi. 3 (see note) there has probably been a confusion between these words, but it is unnecessary to alter the text here.

in all generations] More forcibly the Heb., *in generation and generation*, i.e. in each successive generation. So Deut. xxxii. 7 (A.V. *many generations*).

2. *the mountains*] Named first because they were regarded as the most ancient parts of the earth. Cp. Deut. xxxiii. 15; Prov. viii. 25; Hab. iii. 6.

thou hadst formed] Lit. *didst travail in birth with*. The LXX and some other Ancient Versions, startled perhaps by the boldness of the metaphor, read the passive, and hence P.B.V., *were made*. For the metaphor of the birth of Creation cp. Job xxxviii. 8, 28, 29; Gen. ii. 4. The same words are used of Israel in Deut. xxxii. 18.

the world] The Heb. word *tēbhēl* denotes the fruitful, habitable part of the earth. Cp. Prov. viii. 31.

from everlasting to everlasting &c.] From eternity to eternity: from the infinite past (as men speak) into the infinite future, *thou art* EL, the God of sovereign power. Cp. Is. xliv. 6; xlviii. 12. It is also possible to render, *Even from everlasting to everlasting art thou, O God* (cp. xciii. 2).

3. The thought here is not merely that man's life is infinitely brief in contrast to the eternity of God, but that it is absolutely at His disposal. The Psalmist plainly refers to Gen. iii. 19, though he chooses different words to emphasise his point: **Thou makest mortal man return to atoms.** *Enōsh* denotes man in his frailty (ciii. 15): *dakkā*, lit. *pulverisation*, implies the dissolution of the body into its constituent elements.

and sayest, Return &c.] Two interpretations deserve consideration: (1) 'Return to the dust whence ye were taken,' cp. cxlvi. 4; Job x. 9; xxxiv. 15. (2) 'Return into being,' a call to new generations to appear on the stage of history (Is. xli. 4). Cp. P.B.V. "Again thou sayest, Come again, ye children of men." In favour of (2) it is urged that *and sayest* implies fresh action on the part of God: and that the antithesis of the rise of new generations as the old pass away is more forcible than the synonymous parallelism of (1): but (2) involves a somewhat strained interpretation of *Return*, and the evident allusion to Gen. iii. 19 is in favour of (1). The interpretations *Return to Me* (cp. Eccl. xii. 7), and *Return to life* in the resurrection, are untenable.

4. The precise connexion of the thought is obscure. Some com-

Are but as yesterday when it is past,
And *as* a watch in the night.
5 Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are *as*
a sleep:
In the morning *they are* like grass *which* groweth up.

mentators connect *v.* 4 with *v.* 2, treating *v.* 3 as a parenthesis. 'Thou art eternal, for lapse of time makes no difference to Thee.' But it seems preferable to connect *v.* 4 directly with *v.* 3. 'Thou sweepest away one generation after another, for the longest span of human life is but a day in Thy sight: though a man should outlive the years of Methuselah, it is as nothing in comparison with eternity.'

when it is past] Strictly, *when it is on the point of passing away.* A whole millennium to God, as He reviews it, is but as the past day when it draws towards its close,—a brief space with all its events still present and familiar to the mind. Cp. 2 Pet. iii. 8, where the converse truth is also affirmed; Ecclus. xviii. 10.

and as *a watch in the night*] A climax. Said I like the past day? Nay, time no more exists for God than it does for the unconscious sleeper. The Israelites divided the night into three watches (Lam. ii. 19; Jud. vii. 19; 1 Sam. xi. 11). The division into four watches mentioned in the N.T. was of Roman origin.

How could the profound truth that time has no existence to the Divine mind be more simply and intelligibly expressed? To God there is no before and after; no past and future; all is present. To Him 'was, and is, and will be, are but is.' It is only the weakness of the finite creature that 'shapes the shadow, Time.'

5. *Thou carriest them away as with a flood*] A single word in the Heb. suffices to draw the picture. Man is compared to a building swept away by a sudden burst of rain such as is common in the East. Cp. Is. xxviii. 2; xxx. 30; Matt. vii. 25, 27.

they are as *a sleep*] As those who are asleep. Or, **they fall asleep,** in the sleep of death. Cp. lxxvi. 6; Jer. li. 39, 57; Nah. iii. 18.

in the morning &c.] Another figure for the transitoriness of human life, developed in *v.* 6. Cp. ciii. 15, 16; Job xiv. 2; Is. xl. 6 ff. Its significance depends on the peculiar character of some of the grasses in Palestine. "The grasses of the Jordan valley and the Dead Sea basin are very peculiar, seldom becoming turf-like, or compact in growth, shooting up in early spring with the greatest luxuriance, and then as rapidly seeding and dying down, scorched and burnt up at once, and leaving for the rest of the year no other trace of their existence than the straggling stems from which the seeds and their sheath have long been shaken." Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 453.

The P.B.V. follows the LXX, Vulg., and Jer. in its rendering, *and fade away suddenly like the grass.* The verb may mean to pass away as well as *to grow* or *shoot up*, but it must clearly have the same meaning in both verses, and *v.* 6 appears to be decisive for the latter meaning. Some commentators indeed render *passes away* in both

In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; 6
In the evening it is cut down, and withereth.
For we are consumed by thine anger, 7
And by thy wrath are we troubled.
Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, 8
Our secret *sins* in the light of thy countenance.
For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: 9
We spend our years as a tale *that is told.*
The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten; 10
And if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years,
Yet *is* their strength labour and sorrow;
For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

verses, but the sense *in the morning it flourishes and passes away* is unsatisfactory. The double rendering *dried up and withered* in P.B.V. comes down through the Vulg. from the LXX.

6. *it is cut down*] Or, *it fadeth.* Cp. xxxvii. 2.

7—12. Human life is at best brief and uncertain; and Israel's life is being spent under the cloud of God's wrath for the punishment of its sins.

7. *For* &c.] This is the Psalmist's reason for reminding God of the frailty of human life. **We**—Israel—**have been consumed through thine anger, and through thy wrath have we been dismayed.** He speaks of it not as a general truth but as an actual experience. *Dismayed* is a word specially used of the consternation inspired by Divine judgements. Cp. vi. 2, 3; xlviii. 5; and the cognate subst. *terror*, Lev. xxvi. 16.

8. Instead of 'hiding His face' from their sins He sets them all before Him, and drags them all to light. Elsewhere 'the light of God's countenance' denotes His favour; here a slightly different word, lit. *the luminary of Thy face*, is used to denote His Presence as a searching light from which nothing can be hid. *Our secret* [*sin*] is rather the inward sin of the heart unseen by man but known to God (xliv. 21, a cognate word), than sin of which the sinner is himself unconscious (xix. 12), though this may be included.

9. *are passed away*] Lit. *turn* or *decline* towards evening (Jer. vi. 4). We are "a generation of thy wrath" (Jer. vii. 29). Our life is drawing to a close under a cloud; there is no sign of 'light at evening-tide.'

we spend &c.] Lit. **we consume our years as a sigh**: they are past as quickly as a sigh, itself the expression of sorrow and weariness. The meaning of the word is however uncertain. Some explain, *as a thought*, comparing Theognis, 979, "Swift as a thought gay youth is past and gone": the Targ. gives *as a breath*: A.V. follows Jerome, "consumpsimus annos nostros quasi sermonem loquens."

10. The punctuation of A.V. is misleading. Render:

The days of our years—therein are threescore years and ten,
And if we be of much strength, fourscore years:
And their pride is but travail and misery,
For it is swiftly past, and we have taken flight.

11 Who knoweth the power of thine anger?
Even according to thy fear, *so is* thy wrath.
12 So teach *us* to number our days,
That we may apply *our* hearts *unto* wisdom.
13 Return, O LORD, how long?
And let it repent thee concerning thy servants.
14 O satisfy us early *with* thy mercy;
That we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
15 Make us glad according to the days *wherein* thou hast afflicted us,

Our lifetime (Gen. xlvii. 8, 9) is but short at best; and all its ostentation, all upon which man prides himself, does but bring trouble and has no real value (Job v. 6). Is the Psalmist thinking of the contrast between the triumphant utterance of Num. xxiii. 21, "Misery hath not been beheld in Jacob, nor travail been seen in Israel," and present experience? For *taken flight* cp. Job xx. 8.

11. Who knoweth the power of thine anger,
And thy wrath according to the fear that is due unto thee? (R.V.)

Who understands or lays to heart the intensity of God's wrath against sin so as to fear Him duly with that reverence which is man's safeguard against offending Him? Cp. v. 7; Prov. iii. 7; viii. 13; xvi. 6; Ex. xx. 20; Deut. v. 29.

12. *So teach* us] *So* then, as Thy fear (*v.* 11) which is "the beginning of wisdom" requires, *make* us *know* how &c.: give us that discernment which we lack.

that we may apply &c.] **That we may get us an heart of wisdom** (R.V.). The verb is used of garnering in the harvest. The second line combines the thoughts of Deut. v. 29 and xxxii. 29.

13—17. Prayer for such a restoration of God's favour to His people as will gladden the members of it through the brief span of life. Perhaps the connexion with the preceding verses is the hope that Israel's resipiscence may prepare the way for Jehovah's return.

13. A combined reminiscence of Ex. xxxii. 12 and Deut. xxxii. 36. Cp. too Ps. vi. 3, 4. *Return* is the most obvious rendering; but the passage in Ex. suggests that the meaning may be, *Turn* from thy wrath; *how long* wilt thou be angry? Cp. lxxx. 4. God's change of attitude is spoken of in Scripture after the manner of men as repenting or relenting; not of course that He can *regret* His course of action, or be subject to mutability of purpose.

14. O satisfy us in the morning with thy lovingkindness] Israel is still in the night of trouble. O may the dawn soon come! Cp. xxx. 5; xlix. 14; cxliii. 8.

that we may rejoice] Or, shout for joy, as v. 11, and often.

15. *Make us glad according to the days* &c.] Let the joy of restoration to Thy favour be proportioned to the depth of our humiliation.

And the years *wherein* we have seen evil.
Let thy work appear unto thy servants,
And thy glory unto their children.
And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us:
And establish thou the work of our hands upon us;
Yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

Cp. Is. lxi. 7. The form of the word for 'days' (*y'mōth*) occurs elsewhere only in Deut. xxxii. 7; and the word for *afflicted* is the same as that rendered *to humble thee* in Deut. viii. 2, 3, 16.

16. *Let thy work appear*] Manifest Thy power on their behalf. God's *work* denotes especially the exertion of His saving Providence. Cp. xcii. 4; Deut. xxxii. 4; Hab. iii. 2.

thy glory] *Thy majesty*, manifested in their deliverance. Cp. cxi. 3; Is. xl. 5. The division of the clauses is of course purely rhythmical. The sense of the whole verse is, Let Thy working and Thy majesty appear unto Thy servants and abide upon their children.

17. *the beauty*] Or, *pleasantness*: the gracious kindliness of Jehovah. Cp. xxvii. 4; Prov. iii. 17.

the work of our hands] A phrase characteristic of Deuteronomy, where it occurs seven times. All the ordinary undertakings of daily life are meant, not necessarily any particular enterprise.

The Psalmist's prayer is for the restoration of Israel. In the renewed life of the nation (Lam. v. 21) the servants of God will recover the gladness of their individual lives, now quenched and dead. The time had not yet come when the hope of personal immortality could be appealed to as the consolation of sorrow and the consecration of effort (1 Cor. xv. 58).

PSALM XCI.

This exquisite Psalm may no doubt simply describe the security of the godly man under Jehovah's protection amid the perils of his journey through life. But it gains in point and force if it is regarded as addressed to Israel[1] in a crisis of its history. Pss. xc, xci, xcii are connected by several links of thought and language. Cp. xc. 1, xci. 9, 'dwelling-place'; xc. 6, xcii. 7, 'flourish'; xc. 15, 16, xcii. 4, 'make glad,' 'thy work'; xci. 1, 9, xcii. 1, 'Most High'; xci. 8, xcii. 11, the judgement of the wicked. It is natural to consider them as a group. If now Ps. xc is the plea of Israel in exile, and Ps. xcii its thanksgiving for deliverance, may not Ps. xci be the voice of faith assuring Israel that it will be safe in the midst of the calamities which are about to fall upon Babylon? As Israel was untouched by the judgements upon the Egyptians which were the prelude to its deliverance, so it will be now before the exodus from Babylon. Jehovah's Presence will defend His

[1] For the address to Israel in the singular cp. Ex. xxiii. 20 ff.; Deut. xxxii. 6; and many other passages. See *Introd.* pp. li f.

people in a day of distress. The promises of Exod. xxiii. 20 ff. and Jeremiah's prophecies of Israel's deliverance from Babylon seem to have been in the Psalmist's mind. With *v.* 11 cp. Ex. xxiii. 20; with *v.* 16 cp. Ex. xxiii. 26; *vv.* 3, 5—7 are an expansion of Ex. xxiii. 25 *b*; with *v.* 15 cp. Jer. xxx. 7, "a time of distress for Jacob"; xxx. 11, "I am with thee to save thee"; xxx. 19, "I will glorify them"; with xc. 15, xcii. 4 cp. Jer. xxxi. 13, "I will make them glad."

The use of the first person in *vv.* 2, 9 *a*, followed by the second person in *vv.* 3 ff., 9 *b* ff., is somewhat perplexing. Many commentators suppose that the text is corrupt and emend it in various ways (see notes on *vv.* 1, 9). But the two occurrences of the first person mutually support one another. If the interpretation suggested above is adopted, *vv.* 1, 2 and 9 *a* will be the profession of the Psalmist's faith, on the strength of which he addresses to Israel the comforting words of *vv.* 3 ff., 9 *b* ff. If the reference of the Psalm is not national but individual, these verses will be addressed, in accordance with the usual practice of the didactic style, to any godly Israelite. Cp. e.g. Ps. xxxvii. Another possible explanation is that the Psalmist, after addressing God in words of confident faith, addresses himself, and reminds himself in detail of all that is meant by that Divine guardianship. For a parallel comp. Ps. cxxi. It has also been suggested that the Psalm was intended to be sung antiphonally; one voice or choir chanting *vv.* 1, 2, and another answering in *vv.* 3—8; the first striking in again with *v.* 9 *a*, and the second again responding in *vv.* 9 *b*—13, while a third recited the Divine speech in *vv.* 14—16[1].

The Psalm falls into two equal divisions. (i) The Psalmist's profession of trust in Jehovah, the Most High, the Almighty, gives the theme of the Psalm (1, 2), which is developed in detail (3—8): (ii) the repetition of this profession in the briefest form (9 *a*) introduces a further development of it (9 *b*—13), and the Psalm closes with a Divine assurance answering to the Psalmist's opening profession, and authoritatively confirming his confidence (14—16).

This Psalm expands the thought of xc. 1, and furnishes a corrective to the somewhat desponding tone of that Psalm.

Like Ps. xc it shews familiarity with the language of Deut. xxxii. Cp. *v.* 2 with Deut. xxxii. 37; *vv.* 4, 12 with Deut. xxxii. 11; *v.* 6 with Deut. xxxii. 24; *v.* 8 with Deut. xxxii. 35, 41; *v.* 13 with Deut. xxxii. 33.

Compare also Ps. cxxi; Job v. 19—26; Prov. iii. 23—26.

91 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High

1, 2. The theme of the Psalm; Jehovah a secure defence for those who take refuge in Him.

1. Whoever takes refuge with God will find himself under the protection of an Almighty guardian. "He shall be treated as *God's guest*

[1] The Targum recognises the idea of a plurality of speakers, explaining the Ps. as a dialogue between David and Solomon. *vv.* 2, 3, "David said, 'I will say to Jehovah,' &c. 'For He shall deliver thee, Solomon my son,' &c." *v.* 9, "Solomon answered and said thus, 'For thou Jehovah art my refuge, in a lofty dwelling hast Thou placed the abode of Thy Majesty' (*Shechinah*)." *v.* 10, "The Lord of the world answered and said thus, 'There shall no evil befall thee,' &c."

Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the LORD, *He is* my refuge and my fortress: 2
My God; in him will I trust.
Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, 3

...His Almighty Power shall be spread around him during the night of trouble and peril. Loving faith on man's part shall be met by faithful love on God's part" (Kay). Such is the sense of the A.V., which is certainly the most natural rendering of the verse. It is however rejected by most modern commentators as tautological. The predicate, it is said, simply repeats the subject, for the verb *shall abide*, or *lodge*, does not bear the emphatic meaning of permanent sojourn. But the verb is not used of temporary sojourn only (cp. xxv. 13), and if the emphasis is on the words *in the shelter of the Almighty*, the second line is not merely a repetition of the first.

Other renderings which have been suggested are (1) *As one that dwelleth in the covert of the Most High, that lodgeth in the shadow of the Almighty, I will say*, &c. Cp. R.V. marg. This construction however is harsh and cumbrous. (2) With the insertion of a word at the beginning of *v.* 1, *Happy is the man that dwelleth...that lodgeth...that saith...*; an emendation plausible enough in itself, but without any support from the Ancient Versions. (3) With a slight change of text, *He that dwelleth... that lodgeth...saith of Jehovah.* This emendation has much to commend it. It is supported by the LXX (ἐρεῖ), and it gets rid of the supposed tautology, as well as of the somewhat perplexing first person *I will say* in *v.* 2.

But it is unnecessary if *v.* 1 is explained as above; the gain to the sense is doubtful; and the elimination of the first person destroys a feature of the Psalm. Its use here is supported by its recurrence in *v.* 9.

secret place] Covert or hiding-place. Cp. xxvii. 5; xxxi. 20; xxxii. 7, &c.

the shadow] Shelter or protection. The figure is probably (cp. *v.* 4) derived from the care of the mother-bird for her young (xvii. 8, &c.), rather than from the hospitable roof (Gen. xix. 8), or sheltering rock (Is. xxxii. 2).

the Most High...the Almighty] Significant titles, chosen to emphasise the power of the Sovereign Ruler of the world to defend His people.

2. **I will say unto Jehovah, My refuge and my fortress;**
My God in whom I will trust.

I can and will address Him thus in the language of faith. Cp. xviii. 2; xxxi. 3; lxxi. 3.

3—8. The providential care of God described in detail. The Psalmist, if the interpretation advocated above is correct, now addresses Israel; or, it may be, any godly Israelite.

3. *Surely he* &c.] **For HE** &c. The pronoun is emphatic.

the snare of the fowler] All insidious attempts against life or welfare (cxxiv. 7; cxli. 9, &c.; 2 Tim. ii. 26).

And from the noisome pestilence.
4 He shall cover thee with his feathers,
And under his wings shalt thou trust:
His truth *shall be thy* shield and buckler.
5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night;
Nor for the arrow *that* flieth by day;
6 *Nor* for the pestilence *that* walketh in darkness;
Nor for the destruction *that* wasteth at noonday.
7 A thousand shall fall at thy side,
And ten thousand at thy right hand;
But it shall not come nigh thee.
8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold
And see the reward of the wicked.
9 Because thou hast made the LORD, *which is* my refuge,

and *from the noisome pestilence*] **from** [omit *and*] **the destroying pestilence.** But *pestilence* comes later in *v.* 6, and the LXX, Symm., and Syr., give a better parallel to *the snare of the fowler* by the reading, which involves only a change of vocalisation, **from the destroying word** of malignant calumny and slander. Cp. the same parallel in xxxviii. 12, and the numerous complaints of slander, and prayers to be delivered from it; e.g. v. 9; cxx. 2, 3.

4. **He shall shelter thee with his pinions,**
And under his wings shalt thou take refuge:
His truth is a shield and buckler.

Cp. v. 11, 12; xvii. 8; lxiii. 7; and the figure in Deut. xxxii. 11, though the application there is different. God's truth, i.e. His faithfulness to His promises, will be a defence against hostile calumnies. The words rendered *shield* and *buckler* both denote large shields, protecting the whole of the person.

5. Neither sudden assaults of enemies by night, nor open attacks by day (Cant. iii. 8; Jer. vi. 4, 5; Prov. iii. 24, 25) shall have power to harm thee. The language is figurative: all hostility, whether secret or avowed, is meant.

6. Plague and Pestilence are personified as destroying angels. Cp. Is. xxxvii. 36.

7, 8. **Though a thousand fall...it shall not come nigh thee**] The emphasis is on **thee.** Thou shalt be as safe as Israel when the firstborn of the Egyptians were smitten (Ex. xii. 23): unharmed thyself thou shalt be a spectator of the punishment of the wicked, as Israel was at the Red Sea (Ex. xiv. 30, 31). That punishment is the indispensable counterpart of the deliverance of the righteous, *vv.* 14—16. Cp. xcii. 11, and notes there.

9—16. Renewed assurances of Divine protection, ratified by a Divine promise.

9. **For thou, Jehovah, art my refuge!**

Even the most High, thy habitation;
There shall no evil befall thee, 10
Neither shall *any* plague come nigh thy dwelling.
For he shall give his angels charge over thee, 11
To keep thee in all thy ways.
They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, 12
Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.
Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: 13
The young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will 14
I deliver him:

Thou hast made the Most High thy habitation.

So we must render. The A.V. is an attempt to escape from the difficulties of the verse, but it involves an intolerably harsh construction. As the text stands, the Psalmist begins the second division of the Psalm by repeating the profession of *v.* 2, and then, as before, addresses Israel as a whole, or the godly Israelite. *v.* 9*b* is virtually a protasis;—*If* or *since thou hast made...there shall no evil befall thee.*

Here too some critics would cut the knot of the change of persons by emending, *Because thou hast said, Jehovah is my refuge*, and *hast made the Most High thy habitation*; or, *For as for thee, Jehovah is thy refuge*. But the change is unnecessary. The word for *habitation* is the same as that rendered *dwelling-place* in xc. 1. The rendering of the P.B.V., "thou hast set thine house of defence very high," is probably a misunderstanding of the Vulg. *altissimum posuisti refugium tuum*, which, as the LXX, τὸν ὕψιστον ἔθου καταφυγήν σου, shews, means, *Thou hast made the Most High thy refuge*. It is supported by the Targum (see note 1, p. 554), but in view of the use of 'Most High' in *v.* 1 and xcii. 1 can hardly be right.

10. *befall thee*] Lit., *be let befall thee*. Cp. Prov. xii. 21.

thy dwelling] Lit., *thy tent*, a survival of the language of nomad life.

11. Cp. Gen. xxiv. 7, 40; Ex. xxiii. 20 ("I send an angel before thee to keep thee in the way"); Ps. xxxiv. 7. This verse and the next were quoted by the Tempter (Matt. iv. 6; Luke iv. 10, 11). If the words are primarily addressed to Israel, there is a particular force in the citation. Israel was a type of Christ; had He not then the fullest right to claim for Himself the promises made to Israel?

12. Upon their hands shall they bear thee] Cp. the metaphor in Ex. xix. 4.

lest thou dash &c.] and stumble and fall. Cp. Prov. iii. 23.

13. Thou shalt triumphantly overcome all obstacles and dangers, whether of fierce and open violence, or of secret and insidious treachery. Cp. Luke x. 19; Rom. xvi. 20.

14—16. God Himself speaks, solemnly confirming the Psalmist's faith.

14. *he hath set his love upon me*] Love responds to love. The word

I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.
15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him:
I *will be* with him in trouble;
I will deliver him, and honour him.
16 *With* long life will I satisfy him,
And shew him my salvation.

means *to cling to with love*, and is used of God's love for Israel in Deut. vii. 7; x. 15.

set him on high] In safety from his enemies. Cp. xx. 1.

known my name] Recognised My revealed character as the faithful guardian of My people. Cp. ix. 10; v. 11.

15, 16. Cp. l. 15, 23.

honour him] Or, *glorify him*. Cp. Jer. xxx. 19.

with *long life*] Lit., *with length of days* (Deut. xxx. 20; Prov. iii. 2, 16); in fulfilment of the ancient promises, Ex. xx. 12; xxiii. 26 ("the number of thy days I will fulfil"), and in contrast to the destruction of the wicked, *vv.* 7, 8.

satisfy] Cp. xc. 14

my salvation] Visible manifestations of God's Providence proving His care for His people, such as the author of Ps. xc desired to see, and especially the deliverance from Babylon. Cp. xcviii. 2, 3. Each such manifestation was a harbinger of the final Messianic glory which is the goal of O.T. hope. In the light of N.T. revelation the words of the verse gain a new and larger meaning (1 John v. 11; 1 Pet. i. 5 ff.).

PSALM XCII.

i. To sing Jehovah's praise is a duty and delight. The proofs of His righteous government of the world fill the Psalmist's heart with joy. Only unspiritual men fail to perceive that the prosperity of the wicked is but the prelude to their ruin, while Jehovah sits enthroned on high for ever (1—8).

ii. His enemies perish, while His people are brought to honour. They rejoice in the discomfiture of the wicked and the triumph of the righteous as the proof of His sovereign power and faithfulness (9—15).

Thus the first division of the Psalm leads up to the central thought of *v* 8, the supreme sovereignty of Jehovah which makes for righteousness; and the second division further illustrates the exercise of that sovereignty in the judgement of the wicked and the advancement of the righteous. The problems which perplexed the authors of Pss. xxxvii and lxxiii will ultimately receive a triumphant solution, of which an earnest has been already experienced.

It is clear that the Psalm is not merely an expression of individual gratitude for personal mercies. The Psalmist speaks on behalf of the community of Israel, as a representative of the true members of it. Such jubilant thanksgiving must surely have been prompted by some

particular exhibition of Jehovah's sovereign power on behalf of His people; and it is most natural to connect the Psalm with the judgement of Babylon and the Restoration from the Exile.

Do we feel *v.* 11 to be a jarring note in the midst of otherwise noble thoughts? Its harshness is mitigated if the triumph is national, not personal. The Psalmist felt intensely that Israel's cause was the cause of Jehovah against idolatry, the cause of truth against falsehood, the cause of righteousness struggling for existence against dominant tyranny and violence. Who would not rejoice in the victory of the right? And the expression of that joy necessarily took a concrete form. The Israelite did not speak, as we do, of the defeat of evil and the triumph of good, but of the destruction of the wicked and the prosperity of the righteous. See notes on lviii. 10, 11; and *Introd.* pp. lxxxviii ff.

The title, **A Psalm, a Song for the Sabbath day**, refers to the use of the Psalm in the services of the second Temple. (See *Introd.* p. xxvii.) We learn from the Talmud that it was sung at the libation of wine which accompanied the sacrifice of the first lamb of the Sabbath burnt-offering (Num. xxviii. 9, 10). Possibly it was selected because *v.* 4 was supposed to refer to the works of creation. But whatever may have been the reason for the choice, it suggests a noble conception of the "day of the soul's rest" as a day of joyous thanksgiving and devout meditation on the works of God. The Targum paraphrases the title curiously, "a Psalm of praise and song which the first man uttered upon the day of the Sabbath."

A Psalm *or* Song for the sabbath day.

It is a good *thing* to give thanks unto the LORD, 92
And to sing *praises* unto thy name, O most High:
To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, 2
And thy faithfulness every night,

1—3. Introduction: the joy and seemliness of praise and thanksgiving.

1. It is a *good* thing] As a tribute due to God; as a salutary and delightful occupation for man.

to sing praises] **To make melody** or sing psalms; the word from which *mizmōr*, 'a psalm,' is derived.

unto thy name, O Most High] To Jehovah as He has revealed Himself in His character of Supreme Governor of the world. Cp. vii. 17; ix. 2; xviii. 49.

2. Morning and evening are natural times for prayer (v. 3; lxiii. 6; lv. 17, &c.); lovingkindness and faithfulness are the attributes which move God to make and keep His covenant with His people (lxxxix. 1, note). The division of the verse into two parallel clauses is rhythmical, not logical (cp. xc. 16), but there is an appropriateness in the connexion of lovingkindness with the morning (xxx. 5; lix. 16; xc. 14; Lam. iii. 23), and faithfulness with the night.

3 Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery;
Upon the harp with a solemn sound.

4 For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work:
I will triumph in the works of thy hands.
5 O LORD, how great are thy works!
And thy thoughts are very deep.
6 A brutish man knoweth not;
Neither doth a fool understand this.
7 When the wicked spring as the grass,

3. With decachord and with psaltery,
With meditative music on the harp.

In xxxiii. 2; cxliv. 9, *ten-stringed* is an epithet of *psaltery*, but here two instruments seem to be meant. *Higgāyōn* occurs in ix. 16 as a technical term, denoting apparently an instrumental interlude. The word denotes *musing* or *meditation* in xix. 14. See *Introd.* p. xxiv.

4—8. The special ground for praise in the manifestation of Jehovah's sovereignty.

4. *hast made me glad through thy work*] The prayer of xc. 15, 16 has been answered. God has wrought for Israel.

I will triumph] Or, as in xc. 14, **I will shout for joy.** Not only joy but the expression of it is meant.

the works of thy hands] Or, **the doings of thy hands**, a different word from that in the preceding line. The context makes it clear that God's *work* and *doings* do not here mean the works of creation (viii. 3, 6), but the dealings of His Providence (xxviii. 5; cxliii. 5; Is. v. 12). It is the victory of righteousness which has gladdened the Psalmist's heart.

5. How great are thy doings, Jehovah!
Exceeding deep are thy thoughts.

The grandeur and profundity of Jehovah's designs in the government of the world stir the Psalmist's admiration. Cp. xxxvi. 6; xl. 5; cxxxix. 17, 18; Is. lv. 8, 9; Rom. xi. 33, 34.

"Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign Will."

6. *A brutish man...a fool*] Men who are mere sensuous animals, stupid and unreceptive, incapable of discerning spiritual things. Cp. xlix. 10; lxxiii. 22; xciv. 8.

this] Namely, the truth expressed in *vv.* 7, 8, that the wicked flourish only to perish, while Jehovah is eternally supreme. There should be a colon only at the end of *v.* 6.

7, 8. The tenses in *v.* 7 (cp. *vv.* 10, 11) do not merely express a general truth, but point to some particular event.

When the wicked did flourish as the herbage,

And when all the workers of iniquity do flourish;
It is that they shall be destroyed for ever:
But thou, LORD, *art most* High for evermore. 8
For lo, thine enemies, O LORD, 9
For lo, thine enemies shall perish;
All the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.
But my horn shalt thou exalt like *the horn of* an unicorn: 10
I shall be anointed with fresh oil.

And all the workers of iniquity did blossom,
It was that they might be destroyed for ever:
But thou art on high for evermore, Jehovah.

The simile suggests the rapid growth and equally rapid ruin of the wicked. See note on xc. 5. Their triumph is the preparation for their fall. Cp. xxxvii. 35 ff.; lxxiii. 18 ff.

The simple stately rhythm of *v.* 8—a single line—well expresses the contrast of the unchanging supremacy of Jehovah to the upstart pretentiousness of the wicked. They deify themselves, claiming all power in earth and heaven (lxxiii. 8, 9), only to vanish and leave Jehovah's sovereignty more openly manifested (lxxxiii. 17, 18).

There is an obvious reminiscence of this verse in 1 Macc. ix. 23, "And it came to pass after the death of Judas that the lawless flourished and all the workers of iniquity sprang up."

9—15. Further confirmation of the sovereignty of Jehovah: the wicked who are His foes perish, the righteous who are His friends flourish.

9. *For lo*] Pointing apparently to some recent actual example. 'Anadiplosis' or rhetorical repetition is a favourite figure in this group of Psalms. Cp. xc. 17; xciii. 1, 3; xciv. 1, 3, 23; xcvi. 13. The first two lines are a reminiscence of Judg. v. 31.

shall be scattered] Lit. *shall scatter themselves.* The seemingly solid phalanx of antagonism breaks up and disperses, disintegrated from within.

10. But my horn hast thou exalted like (the horn of) a wild ox:
I am anointed with fresh oil.

The poet speaks on behalf of Israel restored and glorified. The metaphor is derived from animals tossing their heads in the consciousness of vigour. God has restored to Israel a buoyant sense of life and power to repel its enemies. Cp. lxxxix. 17, 24. 'Unicorn' comes from the LXX through the Vulg.; but the now extinct wild ox (*Bos primigenius*) is doubtless the animal meant. Its strength and untameableness are described in Job xxxix. 9 ff. Cp. Num. xxiii. 22; Deut. xxxiii. 17. See Tristram's *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, pp. 146 ff.

The metaphor in the second line is taken from the use of oil on occasions of festivity (xxiii. 5; xlv. 7; Is. lxi. 3), or as a restorative of strength. The rendering *I am anointed* is however doubtful. Some

11 Mine eye also shall see *my desire* on mine enemies,
And mine ears shall hear *my desire* of the wicked that rise up against me.
12 The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree:
He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
13 Those that be planted in the house of the LORD
Shall flourish in the courts of our God.
14 They shall still bring forth fruit in old age;
They shall be fat and flourishing;
15 To shew that the LORD *is* upright:
He is my rock, and *there is* no unrighteousness in him.

critics would follow the LXX and Symm. in reading the word with different vowels, and rendering, (*and restored*) *my failing strength with fresh oil*. "Israel is imagined as an old man, whose strength is restored through the use of oil" (Cheyne).

11. **And mine eye hath seen (its desire) upon them that laid wait for me:**
Mine ear heard (its pleasure) of them that rose up against me to do evil.

Cp. liv. 7; lix. 10, &c. Do the words grate upon our ears as we repeat the Psalm? Their form indeed belongs to the O.T., yet even the Christian is bidden to rejoice at the judgement of the enemies of God's kingdom (Rev. xviii. 20).

12. The fruitfulness of the palm and the fragrance of the cedar, the stately growth and evergreen foliage of both trees, above all, their longevity in contrast to the ephemeral grass which is the emblem of the wicked, may be among the points of comparison intended. Cp. *v.* 14; i. 3; Hos. xiv. 5, 6; Is. lxv. 22.

13. **Planted in the house of Jehovah**
They shall flourish in the courts of our God.

It is possible that trees had grown in the Temple courts, as they grow at the present day in the Haram area, and that the prosperity and security of the righteous are compared to the luxuriant growth of the carefully tended trees in the sacred precincts. But the expression may be merely figurative. The land was 'Jehovah's house.' Replanted there, Israel will evermore flourish under the care and guardianship of Jehovah. Cp. lii. 8; Is. lxi. 3; Jer. xxxii. 41.

The addition in the P.B.V. 'in the courts *of the house* of our God' is from the Vulg.

14. **They shall still bring forth fruit in old age,** like the palm-tree. Doughty (*Arabia Deserta*, i. 286) speaks of palms 90 feet high and 200 years old, in the oasis of Teyma. **They shall be full of sap and green** (R.V.), like the olive (Judg. ix. 9).

15. *To shew* &c.] To witness by their prosperity to the faithfulness and justice of Jehovah. The verse is based on Deut. xxxii. 4.

PSALM XCIII.

This Psalm is the prelude to the remarkable group of 'theocratic Psalms' xcv—c, and should be studied in connexion with them. Jehovah had from the first been Israel's king (Ex. xv. 18; Deut. xxxiii. 5; 1 Sam. xii. 12), but when He abandoned His people to their enemies He seemed to have abdicated His throne. Now however He has reassumed His royal state, and once more proclaimed Himself King. The prophecy of Is. lii. 7 has been fulfilled. The poet takes up the watchword, *Thy God hath proclaimed Himself king*, and in the judgement of Babylon and the restoration of Israel he sees the proof of Jehovah's sovereignty not over Israel only but over all the world. The heaving waves of the sea of nations may lash themselves into wild fury against the rock of His throne, but it stands eternally unmoved.

This and the other 'theocratic' Psalms have sometimes been interpreted as prophetic pictures of the final advent of Jehovah, the "one far-off divine event, to which the whole creation moves." But it is far more natural to regard them as thanksgivings for some actual event by which Jehovah's sovereignty had been visibly declared. It can hardly be doubted that this event was the Return from Babylon, and that this group of Psalms belongs to the early days of the Restoration. It was in truth a great 'day of Jehovah'; and if in eager faith Prophets and Psalmists spoke of it as though the final revelation of His power had already come, they did but speak as the prophets of an earlier age who looked for the Messiah as the Deliverer from the troubles of their own day, or the Apostles who anticipated the Return of the Lord in their own lifetime. They foreshortened the perspective of the glorious vision that was presented to their view, and it was only as years rolled on that men learned that the purposes which are eternally present to the mind of God can only be realised on the stage of the world's history by slow degrees.

In the LXX is prefixed the title, *For the day before the sabbath, when the land* [or *earth*] *had been filled with inhabitants: a praise-song of David.* The latter part of this title is valueless: the first part is confirmed by the Talmudic tradition. Ps. xciii was in fact the Psalm for Friday in the service of the Second Temple (see *Introd.* p. xxvii), and the reason given in the Talmud is that on the sixth day God finished the work of creation, and began to reign over it. The title in the LXX, ὅτε κατῴκισται ἡ γῆ, may, as Delitzsch supposes, reflect this tradition, and mean *when the earth was filled with inhabitants.* But it may equally well mean *when the land was peopled*, i.e. after the return from the Exile. Cp. the Sept. title of Ps. xcvii; and for the use of κατοικίζειν see LXX of Jer. xvii. 25, κατοικισθήσεται ἡ πόλις αὕτη εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

The LORD reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; 93

1, 2. Jehovah's new proclamation of His eternal sovereignty.

1. Jehovah hath proclaimed himself king; he hath robed himself with majesty;

The LORD is clothed with strength, *wherewith* he hath
girded himself:
The world also is stablished, *that* it cannot be moved.
2 Thy throne is established of old:
Thou *art* from everlasting.
3 The floods have lifted up, O LORD,
The floods have lifted up their voice;

Jehovah hath robed himself, hath girded himself with strength.

The verbs in the perfect tense express not merely a fact (*Jehovah reigneth*) but an act. For a time, while His city was in ruins and His people in exile, He seemed to have divested Himself of the insignia of royalty and abdicated His throne. The ancient promise of Ex. xv. 18 seemed to have failed. But now He has once more vindicated His sovereignty by the deliverance of His people and the judgement of their enemies. The prophet's prayer (Is. li. 9) is answered, his vision (Is. lii. 7) is fulfilled. Jehovah has proclaimed Himself King, put on His royal robes, girded Himself like a warrior for action (Ex. xv. 3; Ps. lxv. 6; Is. lix. 17) with that strength which is His inalienable attribute (Ex. xv. 13; Ps. xxix. 1; lxviii. 34). For *majesty* cp. the use of the cognate verb in Ex. xv. 1, 21 ("hath triumphed gloriously"); and Is. xii. 5 ("excellent things"); xxvi. 10.

"Jehovah has proclaimed Himself king" is the key-note of this group of Psalms of the Restoration (xcvi. 10; xcvii. 1; xcix. 1; cp. ciii. 19). Cp. also xlvii. 7, 8.

the world also is stablished &c.] Yea, **the world shall be stablished that it be not shaken.** This is the consequence of Jehovah's once more assuming His sovereignty. The moral order of the world which seemed tottering to its fall is reestablished. Cp. lxxxii. 5. Here and in xcvi. 10, where the words recur, some critics would follow the Ancient Versions in reading tiqqēn for tiqqōn; *Yea, he has adjusted*, or, *ordered, the world.* Cp. the use of the same word in lxxv. 3. This reading appears in the P.B.V., "He hath made the round world so sure," which follows the Vulg., *etenim firmavit orbem terrae.* But the advantage of the change is doubtful. See note on *v.* 2.

2. Though Jehovah has thus proclaimed His kingdom afresh, it is no novel thing. His sovereignty and His Being are eternal: they know neither beginning nor end (xc. 2; xcii. 8). The contrast between Jehovah's ever firmly established throne and the tottering order of the world which needs His intervention to reestablish it is in favour of the Massoretic text of *v.* 1.

3, 4. The powers of earth menace Jehovah's sovereignty in vain.

3. *The floods*] Lit. *the rivers*, rising up and threatening to inundate the land and sweep everything before them, are emblems of the great world-powers threatening to overspread the world. Thus Assyria is compared by Isaiah to the Euphrates, 'the River' *par excellence*

The floods lift up their waves.
The LORD on high *is* mightier
Than the noise of many waters,
Yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.
Thy testimonies are very sure:
Holiness becometh thine house,
O LORD, for ever.

(Is. viii. 7, 8); Egypt by Jeremiah to the Nile (Jer. xlvi. 7, 8). Similarly the sea with its mighty breakers thundering against the shore as though it would engulf the solid land is an emblem of the heathen world menacing the kingdom of God, but all in vain. For the sea as an emblem of hostile powers cp. xlvi. 3; lxxxix. 9; Is. xvii. 12, 13.

their waves] A word occurring here only, probably meaning collision, clash, din.

4. The A.V. obliterates the structure of the verse. If the received text is retained we may render,

Above the thundering of many waters,
The mighty (waters), the breakers of the sea,
Jehovah on high is mighty.

But the grammatical construction is anomalous, and an easy emendation gives the sense,

Above the thundering of many waters,
Majestic above the breakers of the sea,
Majestic on high is Jehovah.

The repetition is in harmony with the style of the Psalm. The word for *noise*, lit. *voices*, may best be rendered *thundering*, for the plural is only used of thunder. *'Addīr* is inadequately rendered by *mighty*. It suggests the idea of grandeur and magnificence as well as power. Cp. Ex. xv. 6, 11 (a cognate word); Ps. viii. 1 (A.V. *excellent*); Is. xxxiii. 21.

5. *Thy testimonies*] Many commentators explain *testimonies* to mean the promises and threatenings which have now been proved true, comparing the use of the cognate verb in l. 7; lxxxi. 8; Deut. viii. 19; &c. But this sense of the word is unsupported, and it is best to take it in its usual sense of the 'law,' regarded as bearing witness to Jehovah's will and man's duty. Cp. xix. 7; cxi. 7. The transition seems somewhat abrupt; yet it is not inappropriate that the Psalm should close with a reference to the revelation which was the distinctive mark of Jehovah's kingdom (Deut. iv. 7, 8).

holiness &c.] God's house may be either the Temple or the land. The Psalmist is confident that now the ideal will be realised. Jehovah has returned to dwell there, and it shall no more be defiled by Israel itself (Jer. vii. 30), no more be desecrated by heathen invaders (Joel iii. 17; Is. lii. 1).

for ever] R.V. for evermore; lit. *for length of days* (xci. 16).

PSALM XCIV.

This Psalm is a prayer for the revelation of the righteous judgement of God, and an expression of confidence in the ultimate triumph of right. It falls into two main divisions.

i. The Psalmist appeals to Jehovah to manifest Himself as judge of the earth (1, 2). How long will He tolerate the arrogance of the tyrants who oppress His people, and contemptuously declare that He is ignorant or indifferent (3—7)?

Addressing some of his own countrymen who are inclined to doubt Jehovah's moral government of the world he rebukes them for their folly, and argues that Jehovah must of necessity see and hear and in due time punish (8—11).

ii. The second part of the Psalm is occupied with thoughts of consolation for times of trouble. Happy the man who is taught by God to endure patiently until right once more triumphs (12—15).

To whom can Israel look but to Jehovah, Whose love has been proved in time past (16—19)?

He cannot be the ally of injustice, but will defend His people, and exterminate their enemies (20—23).

Who were the oppressors of whom the Psalmist complains? From the contrast in *vv.* 5, 8, 10, 12 it would seem that they were foreigners, who openly despised Israel's God as indifferent to the sufferings of His people (*v.* 7). It is true that much of the language of the Ps. resembles that used elsewhere to describe the oppression of poor Israelites by their powerful countrymen. But it is the community as such (*v.* 5) and not one portion of it, which is oppressed, and a Psalmist who borrows so freely from his predecessors might easily use their language though the circumstances were somewhat different. Dependent though this Psalmist is in almost every line upon earlier literature, his argument with the doubters of God's moral government is urged with a force and originality of his own, and his clear assertion of the Divine education of the nations is almost without parallel in the O.T.

There is little or nothing to fix the date of the Ps. Some points of style and language seem to connect it with the two preceding Psalms. The figure of 'anadiplosis' or rhetorical repetition is common to all three (xcii. 9; xciii. 1, 3; xciv. 1, 3, 23); the same language is applied to the doubters of God's Providence (xcii. 6; xciv. 8); the same terms are used to designate Israel's oppressors (xcii. 7, 11; xciv. 16); xciv. 11 may be a contrast to xcii. 5. Possibly it may belong to the closing years of the Exile, and refer to harsh treatment which the Israelites had to suffer in Babylon. If so, the cry for vengeance is an echo of the language of Is. xl—lxvi and Jer. l, li. But it may belong to some later time in the post-exilic period, when the struggling community was oppressed by foreign governors.

In the LXX the Psalm bears the title *A Psalm of David, for the fourth day of the week*, and according to Talmudic tradition it was the special Psalm for that day in the services of the Second Temple. Cheyne

suggests that its position here, where it certainly intervenes strangely between two jubilant Psalms, arose "out of an attempt (not carried very far) to promote liturgical convenience," though it must obviously be "later than Ps. xciii, from which it differs so much in tone and import" (*Origin of the Psalter*, p. 72). Style however seems to point to a closer connexion of these Psalms than that of liturgical usage merely.

O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; 94
O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself.
Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth: 2
Render a reward to the proud.

LORD, how long shall the wicked, 3
How long shall the wicked triumph?
How long shall they utter *and* speak hard *things?* 4
And all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?
They break in pieces thy people, O LORD, 5

1, 2. An appeal to Jehovah to manifest Himself as Judge of the world and Avenger of wrong.

1. God of vengeance, Jehovah,
God of vengeance, shine forth!

The Psalmist appeals to Jehovah, Who has the power and the right to punish (Deut. xxxii. 35; Nah. i. 2; Rom. xii. 19), to manifest Himself in all the splendour of His Presence (Deut. xxxiii. 2; Ps. l. 2; lxxx. 1). *God* is EL, 'the mighty God'; and the word for *vengeance* is plural, denoting the completeness of the retribution which He can inflict. Cp. "God of recompences," Jer. li. 56. For the 'anadiplosis' cp. *vv.* 3, 23, and xcii. 9, note.

2. *Lift up thyself*] Shew Thyself to be the supremely exalted Ruler. Cp. Is. vi. 1; xxxiii. 10; Ps. vii. 6.

judge of the earth] Cp. Gen. xviii. 25; Ps. lviii. 11; lxxxii. 8. The universal Judge is needed to call the subordinate 'judges of the earth' to account.

render a reward to the proud] R.V. **Render to the proud (their) desert**; assimilating the rendering to that of xxviii. 4. Cp. Lam. iii. 64.

3—7. How long will Jehovah tolerate the tyrannies of these proud blasphemers?

4. The verses run in pairs, and it seems preferable, with A.V., to regard *v.* 4 as a continuation of the question in *v.* 3, rather than, with R.V., to render it as an affirmative sentence. *Workers of iniquity* is the subject to the whole verse.

(How long) shall all workers of iniquity
Belch out, talk arrogantly, act haughtily?

Cp. lix. 2, 7; xxxi. 18. The exact sense of the last verb is doubtful. It may mean 'exalt themselves,' or 'speak proudly one with another.'

5. *They break in pieces*] Or, crush (as Is. iii. 15; Prov. xxii. 22),

And afflict thine heritage.
6 They slay the widow and the stranger,
And murder the fatherless.
7 Yet they say, The LORD shall not see,
Neither shall the God of Jacob regard *it*.

8 Understand, ye brutish among the people:
And ye fools, when will ye be wise?
9 He that planted the ear, shall he not hear?
He that formed the eye, shall he not see?
10 He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct?

by violence and extortion. *Thy people...thine inheritance*, as in xxviii. 9. Cp. Deut. iv. 20.

6. A proverbial expression for inhumanity and treachery. They do not scruple to murder the most defenceless, and those whose lives, by the traditions of Semitic hospitality, should have been inviolable. "From the earliest times of Semitic life the lawlessness of the desert... has been tempered by the principle that the guest is inviolable....To harm a guest, or to refuse him hospitality, is an offence against honour, which covers the perpetrator with indelible shame." Robertson Smith, *Rel. of Semites*, p. 76. Cp. Ex. xxii. 21, 22; Ps. x. 14; Mal. iii. 5.

7. **And they say, Jah doth not see,**
Neither doth the God of Jacob consider.

They proclaim their contempt for Israel's God as one who is either ignorant of the sufferings of His people or indifferent to them (x. 11, 13; lix. 7). He is in their estimation but one among many gods of the nations (Is. xxxvi. 18 ff.).

8—11. From pleading with God the Psalmist turns to argue with those of his fellow-countrymen who are tempted to agree with their oppressors, and to think that Jehovah is wanting either in power or in will to defend them.

8. *Understand*] **Consider.** Those Israelites are addressed who lack the spiritual discernment to realise that in spite of the temporary triumph of the wicked Jehovah still rules (xcii. 6; lxxiii. 22).

when will ye be wise?] **When will ye understand?** a word used of the intelligent consideration of God's working in xiv. 2; lxiv. 9; cvi. 7.

9. It is absurd to suppose that the Creator of the organs of sense does not Himself possess faculties corresponding to them.

10. **He that instructeth the nations, shall not he rebuke?**] The word rendered *chastiseth* in A.V. includes the ideas of instruction, admonition, discipline, chastisement (LXX ὁ παιδεύων, Vulg. *qui corripit*, Jer. *qui erudit*). That rendered *correct* means to reprove, rebuke, call to account, punish (l. 21). This noteworthy passage stands almost by itself in the O.T. in its explicit assertion that there is a divine education of the nations, analogous to the divine education of Israel (Deut. viii. 5, &c.), an education which must involve fatherly correction and chastise-

He that teacheth man knowledge, *shall not he know?*
The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, 11
That they *are* vanity.
Blessed *is* the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, 12
And teachest him out of thy law;
That *thou* mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, 13

ment (Prov. iii. 12). It anticipates the teaching of St Paul in Rom. i. 20; ii. 14, 15. Yet long before this, Amos had implicitly taught that a measure of moral knowledge is possessed by the heathen, for the right use of which they are responsible (Am. i, ii). Cp. also Ps. lxv. 2, and the general purport of the Book of Jonah.

he that teacheth &c.] We expect a question such as A.V. supplies, to complete the sentence, *shall not he know?* But instead of putting the question the poet breaks off abruptly, and substitutes the comprehensive affirmation of *v.* 11. It is prosaic to render as R.V., "even he that teacheth &c."

11. The positive answer to the self-delusion of the wicked and the doubts of the faithless. Jehovah not only sees their works, but knows their very thoughts.

that they are *vanity*] So the LXX, quoted by St Paul in 1 Cor. iii. 20, with the substitution of *the wise* for *men* to suit his argument. This rendering gives a good sense, and suggests an emphatic contrast between the designs of men and the designs of God (xcii. 5). But the masculine pronoun *they* is more naturally referred to *man* than to the feminine word for *thoughts*, and its emphatic position further points to the rendering, **For they**, in contrast to Jehovah, **are (but) a breath** (xxxix. 5). How can man, the feeble creature of a day, escape the knowledge of the Omniscient and Eternal, or entertain designs which He cannot fathom?

12—15. The Psalmist consoles himself and his fellow-sufferers with the thought that they are being educated by God, and that, sooner or later, Right must have its rights.

12, 13. **Happy the man whom thou instructest, Jah,**
And teachest out of thy law,
To give him rest from the days of evil,
Until a pit be dug for the wicked.

Israel, as well as the nations (*v.* 10) is being divinely educated, and that with a higher teaching, the teaching of revelation. This will give him such an insight into the ways of God's Providence, as will enable him to endure calmly, without murmuring or losing heart, until the day of retribution overtakes the wicked. Cp. Hab. iii. 16. The A.V. rendering *chastenest* limits the meaning of the verb, which is the same as that in *v.* 10. But doubtless it includes the discipline of suffering which Israel was undergoing. Cp. Job v. 17; Prov. iii. 11, 12. The conception of life as a discipline and education is specially characteristic of the Book of Proverbs. The wise man welcomes it, but the fool rebels against it. *Thy law* is not limited to the Pentateuch or any

Until the pit be digged for the wicked.
14 For the LORD will not cast off his people,
Neither will he forsake his inheritance.
15 But judgment shall return unto righteousness:
And all the upright in heart shall follow it.

16 Who will rise up for me against the evildoers?
Or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?
17 Unless the LORD *had been* my help,
My soul had almost dwelt *in* silence.
18 When I said, My foot slippeth;
Thy mercy, O LORD, held me up.
19 In the multitude of my thoughts within me
Thy comforts delight my soul.

part of it, but is synonymous with the *word* of Jehovah, and includes all Divine revelation as the guide of life (i. 2). *The days of evil*, or, *of the evil man*, are the times when wrong and wrong-doers seem to have undisputed sway. Cp. xlix. 5.

until a pit &c.] Until the day of retribution comes, as it certainly will do; a metaphor from the pitfalls used by hunters. Cp. vii. 15; xxxv. 7; lvii. 6.

14. That day will come, for Jehovah cannot finally abandon His persecuted people (*v.* 5). Cp. 1 Sam. xii. 22; Jer. xii. 7; Rom. xi. 1, 2.

15. *But*] Or as R.V. For. Judgement will again be justice: i.e. its administration will once more be conducted upon principles of equity, when those who now pervert it are destroyed; and all true-hearted men will attach themselves to it as its supporters and adherents.

16—19. Israel has no champion but Jehovah. Experience has proved His goodness. The Psalmist is partly speaking in the name of the people even when he uses the singular (*vv.* 16—18; *v.* 23, *our* God), partly expressing his own personal feelings (*v.* 19).

16. *Who will rise up* &c.] Who will stand up as my champion? It is not a question of doubt or unbelief, but an emphatic form of assertion that Israel has no helper but Jehovah.

17. Cp. cxxiv. 1 ff.

almost] R.V. soon.

dwelt in *silence*] The stillness of the grave (cxv. 17).

18. The A.V. misses the picturesqueness of the tenses. *When I said, My foot hath slipped, thy lovingkindness, Jehovah, was supporting me.* I gave myself up for lost, but the right hand of love had hold of me all the time. Cp. xxxviii. 16; xviii. 35.

19. *thoughts*] Or, as R.V. marg., *doubts*: distracting thoughts which *divide* and perplex the mind.

Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship *with* thee, 20
Which frameth mischief by a law?
They gather themselves together against the soul of the 21
righteous,
And condemn the innocent blood.
But the LORD is my defence; 22
And my God *is* the rock of my refuge.
And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, 23
And shall cut them off in their own wickedness;
Yea, the LORD our God shall cut them off.

20—23. The doom of tyrants and the deliverance of their victims.

20. Though He may tolerate them for a time, it is inconceivable that Jehovah should let these rapacious judges shelter themselves under His authority. Cp. l. 21. *The throne* or *tribunal of destruction* (xci. 3, note) denotes the rulers or judges who were ready like a yawning gulf to swallow up the innocent. They contrive **wrong by statute**, inflict injury and misery under the shelter of legal forms. Cp. Is. x. 1, 2.

21. *They gather themselves together*] So the Targ. and Jer., possibly reading *yāgūrū*, as in lvi. 6; lix. 3. The Mass. text however seems to mean *they make raids upon the life of the righteous.*

condemn the innocent blood] I.e. condemn the innocent to death.

22, 23. The R.V. renders, *But the LORD hath been my high tower... and he hath brought upon them their own iniquity.* But the latter clauses of *v.* 23 shew that the punishment of the wicked is still in the future, and it is best to regard the tenses as expressive of certainty: **But Jehovah will surely prove a high tower for me, and my God shall be the rock of my refuge.** Cp. xviii. 2; ix. 9, &c.

and he shall bring upon them &c.] Cause their wrong-doing to recoil upon their own heads. Cp. *v.* 2; liv. 5.

in their own wickedness] Or, *for their evil*: or perhaps, *through their own evil.* Cp. v. 10; vii. 15, 16; ix. 16.

PSALM XCV.

This Psalm consists of two parts, an invitation to worship, and a warning against disobedience.

i. The call to worship Jehovah because He is the Lord of all the world (1—5) is followed by a reiterated call to worship Him because He is in an especial way the God of Israel (6, 7).

ii. The worshippers are solemnly warned not to repeat the sin of their ancestors in the wilderness (8—11).

This is the first of a group of Psalms (xcv—c) strongly marked by common characteristics and obviously intended for liturgical use. The key-note of them has already been struck in Ps. xciii, which forms

a prelude to them, and should be studied in connexion with them. It seems highly probable that they were composed for the Dedication of the Second Temple in B.C. 516, and that the Septuagint titles of Ps. xcvi, *When the house was being built after the Captivity*, and Ps. xcvii, *When his land was being settled*, preserve a true tradition as to their date.

They are the lyrical echo of Is. xl—lxvi, Ps. xcviii in particular being full of resemblances to that collection of prophecies.

In the humiliation of Babylon and the restoration of Israel, Jehovah had proved Himself the sovereign of the world, supreme over all the gods of the heathen. He had vindicated His judicial righteousness and manifested His faithfulness to Israel. The joy of the deliverance culminated in the Dedication of the Temple. That event was the outward expression of the thought that He had once more seated Himself on His throne in Zion, not as the King of Israel only, but as the King of all the world.

But that event might well be an occasion not only for rejoicing but for warning. The deliverance from Babylon was the counterpart of the deliverance from Egypt. What if Israel of the Restoration should tempt Jehovah by faithlessness and disobedience as Israel in the wilderness had done? And therefore this Psalmist hears God's voice tempering their exultation with salutary admonition. Such is the connexion of thought between the two parts of Ps. xcv. The words of *v.* 7 *a*, *b* which recall the care of Jehovah for His people in the wilderness lead up most naturally to the hope that now at least Israel may be obedient (7 *c*), and that hope is fitly followed by the solemn words of divine warning in *vv.* 8—11.

Some critics hold that this Psalm, like Ps. lxxxi, with which it has much in common, is a combination of two separate fragments; but in neither case is such a hypothesis necessary.

In appointing this Psalm, sometimes called the 'Invitatory Psalm,' for daily use as an introduction to the Psalms for the day, the English Church follows a primitive and general usage. "Before the beginning of their prayers," writes Athanasius of the practice of the Church of Constantinople, "Christians invite and exhort one another in the words of this Psalm." In the Western Church the whole Psalm appears to have been generally used. In the Eastern Church an invitatory founded on it is used at the commencement of service. See Daniel, *On the Prayer Book*, p. 88.

95 O come, let us sing unto the LORD:
Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

1, 2. A call to unite in worshipping Jehovah.

1. O come, let us sing aloud unto Jehovah:
Let us shout unto the Rock of our salvation.

Let us greet our God, Whose power has been manifested in the deliverance of His people, with the anthems and acclamations which befit a victorious King. Cp. xlvii. 1; lxvi. 1; lxxxix. 26; xciv. 22.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, 2
And make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.
For the LORD *is* a great God, 3
And a great King above all gods.
In his hand *are* the deep places of the earth: 4
The strength of the hills *is* his also.
The sea *is* his, and he made it: 5
And his hands formed the dry *land*.
O come, let us worship and bow down: 6
Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.

2. Let us present ourselves before his face with thanksgiving,
Let us shout unto him with psalms.

Let us present ourselves before Him in His Temple, bringing with us the sacrifice of thanksgiving. Cp. Mic. vi. 6; Ps. l. 14, 23.

3—5. The reason for this service:—His greatness as the supreme King, the Lord of the world.

3. The thoughts of the greatness of Jehovah, of His sovereignty, and of His supremacy over the gods of the heathen, are characteristic of this group of Psalms. They are not new thoughts (Ex. xv. 11, 18), but fresh reality had been given to them by His revelation of Himself in the humiliation of Babylon and its gods, and the deliverance of Israel.

That the Psalmist attributes any real existence to the gods of the heathen is not to be supposed. They are mere idols, things of nought (xcvi. 5), gods in name but not in reality. He cannot have gone back from the teaching of Jer. x. 3 ff., in which the living God, the Eternal King, the Creator, is contrasted with helpless perishable idols; or have forgotten the scathing sarcasms of Is. xl. 18 ff.; xliv. 9 ff.

4. In whose hand are the secret depths of earth,
And to whom the peaks of the mountains belong.

The depths of the earth which cannot be explored by man (Job xxxviii. 16; Jer. xxxi. 37), the soaring mountain peaks upon which man cannot set his foot, are all under His control.

The meaning of the word for *peaks* is doubtful; but it probably means *eminences* (LXX, Jer.) rather than *strength*.

5. Whose is the sea, for HE made it;
And the dry land, which his hands formed.

Cp. xxiv. 1; lxxxix. 11.

6, 7. A renewed call to worship Jehovah, on the ground of His relation to Israel.

6. Let us offer the lowliest homage expressive of humility and submission to His Will, in contrast to that obstinacy of heart (*v.* 8) which was the ruin of our fathers.

our Maker] It is the 'making' of Israel into a nation, rather than

7 For he *is* our God;
And we *are* the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

To day if ye will hear his voice,
8 Harden not your heart, as *in* the provocation,
And as *in* the day of temptation in the wilderness:
9 When your fathers tempted me,
Proved me, and saw my work.

the creation of individuals, that is meant. Cp. Deut. xxxii. 6, 15, 18; Is. xliv. 2; li. 13; liv. 5; Ps. c. 3; cxlix. 2.

7. *our God*] P.B.V. *the Lord our God*, from the Vulg.

the people &c.] The people whom He shepherds, the flock which is His own especial charge. Cp. lxxiv. 1, note.

To day if ye will hear &c.] The A.V. follows the LXX in taking this clause as the protasis to *v.* 8. But here the Psalmist is still speaking ('his voice'), while in *v.* 8 God speaks; and it is better to take it as a wish, **Oh that to-day ye would hearken to his voice!** Cp. Deut. v. 29. As the Psalmist recalls God's care for His people in the wilderness, He cannot forget their thankless disobedience, and the earnest wish springs to his lips that this generation may not repeat the sin of their forefathers. This wish leads up naturally to the solemn warning of *vv.* 8—11. *To day* is emphatic, and has a special significance if the Psalm was sung at the Dedication of the Second Temple: *now*, in contrast to that former time; *now*, when Jehovah has visibly manifested His goodness; *now*, while the door of opportunity lies open before you. *His voice* is not merely the words which follow, but all His message. Cp. Deut. iv. 30.

8—11. Jehovah speaks, warning Israel not to repeat the sins of obstinacy and unbelief by which their ancestors provoked Him.

8. Harden not your heart, as at Meribah,
As in the day of Massah in the wilderness (R.V.).

Meribah, *Strife*, and Massah, *Temptation*, were the names given to the scene of the murmuring at Rephidim at the beginning of the wandering (Ex. xvii. 1—7); and the scene of the murmuring at Kadesh in the fortieth year was also called Meribah (Num. xx. 1—13). The A.V. follows the LXX and other Ancient Versions in translating the words, but they should certainly be retained as proper names. Cp. Deut. xxxiii. 8; Ps. lxxxi. 7.

9. The Israelites tempted and tried God by faithless doubts of His goodness and arbitrary demands that He should prove His power (Ex. xvii. 2, 7; Ps. lxxviii. 18, 41, 56).

and saw my work] While they on their part tempted God, He on His part was ever working out His providential plan, by mercy and by chastisement. But it suits the context better to render, **Though they**

Forty years long was I grieved with *this* genera- 10
tion,
And said, It *is* a people that do err in *their* heart,
And they have not known my ways:
Unto whom I sware in my wrath 11
That they should not enter into my rest.

had seen my work. (For the construction cp. Neh. vi. 1.) Though they had just had proof of God's power and goodwill in the Exodus, it had not taught them to trust Him. Cp. Num. xiv. 22.

10. *was I grieved*] The Heb. is stronger; **did I loathe** (Ezek. vi. 9).

this *generation*] "*This*" is not in the Heb., which seems to mean, *with a* (*whole*) *generation*. But it is better to read with LXX and Jer., **with that generation.**

And I said, They are a people whose heart goeth astray,
And they know not my ways.

Wandering from the right way (lviii. 3; Is. xxix. 24; liii. 6); incapable of understanding the leadings of God's Providence (lxxxi. 13).

11. Unto *whom* &c.] Or, **Wherefore I sware.** See Num. xiv. 21 ff.

my rest] The Promised Land. Cp. Deut. xii. 9.

vv. 7 *c*—11 are quoted in Heb. iii. 7—11, and applied in detail as a warning to Christians who were in danger of unbelief, lest they too should fail to reach the rest promised to them. The quotation follows the LXX with some slight variations. In Heb. iv. 7, *vv.* 7 *c*, 8 *a* are introduced by the words "saying in David," i.e. 'in the person of David,' not 'in the book of David.' The author may have followed the LXX title, or, according to the common mode of speaking, regarded David as the author of the whole Psalter.

PSALM XCVI.

This spirited Psalm opens the series of 'coronation anthems' which are the response to the invitation of Ps. xcv, and form a lyrical counterpart to the prophecies of Is. xl—lxvi. Its occasion, as we have seen in the Introd. to Ps. xcv, is in all probability rightly indicated by the LXX title, *When the house was being built after the Captivity*. In the recent deliverance of Israel the Psalmist sees the earnest of the establishment of the universal Divine kingdom of righteousness, and he looks forward to the new Temple becoming "a house of prayer for all the peoples." The liturgical use of such Psalms as this served to keep alive the Messianic hope in Israel, and to prepare the way for the Advent of God in Christ. See *Introd.* p. lxxxi.

The Psalm consists of four stanzas.

i. Let Jehovah's praise be sung and His glory proclaimed among all the nations (1—3).

ii. For He alone is supremely great and glorious (4—6).

iii. Let the nations acknowledge Him and pay Him homage in His Temple (7—9).

iv. Let His proclamation of His kingdom be made known throughout the world, and let universal Nature rejoice in the establishment of His righteous rule (10—13).

With some omissions and variations this Psalm forms part (*vv.* 23—33) of the composite anthem which the Chronicler introduces to celebrate the translation of the Ark to Zion (1 Chron. xvi. 8 ff.); and this may be the reason why it is called in the LXX *A Psalm of David*, inconsistently with the earlier part of the title *When the house was being built after the Captivity*. It is hardly necessary to remark that it is quite impossible to regard the Chronicler's Psalm as the original of which this Psalm is a fragment detached for liturgical use.

96 O sing unto the LORD a new song:
Sing unto the LORD, all the earth.
2 Sing unto the LORD, bless his name;
Shew forth his salvation from day to day.
3 Declare his glory among the heathen,
His wonders among all people.
4 For the LORD *is* great, and greatly to be praised:
He *is* to be feared above all gods.
5 For all the gods of the nations *are* idols:

1—3. A call to the universal praise of Jehovah.

1. *O sing unto the LORD a new song*] From Is. xlii. 10. Cp. xcviii. 1; cxlix. 1; xxxiii. 3. Fresh mercies demand fresh expressions of thanksgiving, and the deliverance of Israel from Babylon inaugurates a new stage in the nation's history. *All the earth* is summoned to join in Israel's thanksgiving (c. 1).

2. *Shew forth* &c.] Lit., **Proclaim the good tidings** (LXX, εὐαγγελίζεσθε) **of his salvation**, the deliverance which He has wrought for Israel, **from day to day**, renewing your praises with each returning day, for such a revelation of infinite mercy demands unceasing celebration. Cp. Is. lii. 7.

vv. 1 *b*, 2 *b* are combined in 1 Chron. xvi. 23, *vv.* 1 *a*, 2 *a* being omitted.

3. **Tell of his glory among the nations,**
His marvellous works among all the peoples.

Cp. Is. lxvi. 18; and see note on Ps. ix. 1.

4—6. Jehovah's worthiness to be praised.

4. The first line is borrowed from xlviii. 1 *a* (cp. cxlv. 3): the second combines xlvii. 2 and xcv. 3. Cp. Deut. vii. 21; x. 17.

5. **For all the gods of the peoples are things of nought** [or, idols]; powerless, nay, non-existent. Cp. the argument of Is. xl. 18 ff.; xliv. 9 ff.

But the LORD made the heavens.
Honour and majesty *are* before him:
Strength and beauty *are* in his sanctuary.
Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people,
Give unto the LORD glory and strength.
Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name:
Bring an offering, and come into his courts.
O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness:
Fear before him, all the earth.
Say among the heathen *that* the LORD reigneth:

but the LORD &c.] The appeal to the works of creation as a proof of Jehovah's power occurs frequently in Is. xl—lxvi. See xl. 22; xlii. 5; xliv. 24.

6. The attributes of *honour* and *majesty* (civ. 1) are perhaps personified, and regarded as attendants standing in God's Presence. *Strength* and *beauty* are terms applied in lxxviii. 61 to the Ark, the symbol of His Presence. The *sanctuary* is not heaven, but the restored Temple, where with the eye of faith the Psalmist sees the glory of Jehovah returning to dwell, although the Ark was no longer there to represent it. Cp. Is. lx. 13. 1 Chron. xvi. 27 reads "Strength and gladness are in his place," possibly to adapt the Psalm for the occasion when the Temple did not yet exist.

7—9. An appeal to the nations to acknowledge Jehovah. These verses are a free imitation of xxix. 1, 2.

7. *O ye kindreds of the people*] Ye families of the peoples. Cp. xxii. 27; Am. iii. 2.

8. The glory of his name is given to Jehovah when He is acknowledged as the One Living and True God. The *offering* is the 'present' which subjects bring to their lord in token of their submission (2 Sam. viii. 2). Cp. Is. lx. 5 ff.

For *into his courts* 1 Chron. xvi. 29 reads *before him*, to suit the time when the Temple was not yet built.

9. *in the beauty of holiness*] In holy array. See on xxix. 2. "As the priests were to minister only in 'holy attire' (Ex. xxviii. 2) so must the nations be now clothed with holiness" (Kay).

10—13. Proclaim that Jehovah is King, and let universal Nature rejoice in the prospect of His righteous rule.

10. Say among the nations, Jehovah hath proclaimed himself King. The message to the nations resembles the message to Zion, Is. lii. 7. By His recent action He has proclaimed Himself King not of Israel only but of all the world. Cp. xciii. 1.

The Old Latin Version as preserved in the *Psalterium Romanum* (*Introd.* p. lxxii.) contains the famous reading *Dominus regnavit a ligno*, 'The Lord hath reigned from the tree,' which is quoted by many of the Latin Fathers from Tertullian onwards as a prophecy of Christ's triumph

The world also shall be established *that* it shall not be moved:
He shall judge the people righteously.
11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.
12 Let the field be joyful, and all that *is* therein:
Then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice

through death. Justin Martyr appears to be the only certain Greek authority for the addition[1]. He treats the Psalm as a prophecy of Christ's reign after His crucifixion (*Apol.* i. 41), and in the *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* (c. 73) he charges the Jews with having falsified the text by erasing the words *from the tree* (ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου). The charge is groundless. Doubtless the words were simply a Christian gloss on the text, which had no wide currency, except through the Old Latin Version. No MSS. of the LXX contain them except the transliterated Graeco-Latin *Psalterium Veronense*, which has *apo xylu*, and cod. 156, which has the barbarism ἀπὸ τῷ ξύλῳ. In both cases the reading was probably introduced from the Old Latin.

The words have however been familiarised by Dr Neale's translation of the hymn *Vexilla regis prodeunt*, 'The royal banners forward go' (by Venantius Fortunatus, bishop of Poitiers, † A.D. 609),

"Impleta sunt quae concinit
David fideli carmine,
Dicendo in nationibus
Regnavit a ligno Deus."

"Fulfilled is now what David told,
In true prophetic song of old;
How God the heathen's king should be,
For God is reigning from the Tree."

the world also &c.] **Yea, the world shall be established that it be not shaken.** So xciii. 1 *c*. On the reading *he hath ordered the world*, represented by the LXX, Symm. and Jer., see note there.

he shall judge &c.] **He shall minister judgement unto the peoples in equity.** From ix. 8 *b*, cp. vii. 8. The first and third lines of this verse are omitted in Chron.

11. **Let the heavens be glad and let the earth rejoice** (R.V.)] Such appeals to Nature to rejoice in the redemption of Israel are characteristic of the later Isaiah (xliv. 23; xlix. 13). In the establishment of God's righteous rule the Psalmist sees the prelude of the Messianic age which is to bring harmony and peace to all creation. Cp. Is. xi. 1 ff.; xxxv. 1 ff.; lv. 12, 13; Rom. viii. 19 ff.

roar] Lit. **thunder.** Cp. xcviii. 7.

the fulness thereof] I.e. *all that is therein*, as the same word is rendered in Is. xlii. 10. Cp. Ps. xxiv. 1.

12. *be joyful...rejoice*] **Exult...sing for joy** (R.V.). *Then* is significant: in that age when the Divine kingdom is universally established.

[1] Possibly there may be an allusion to this reading in the Ep. of Barnabas, c. viii., ὅτι ἡ βασιλεία Ἰησοῦ ἐπὶ ξύλου.

Before the LORD, for he cometh, 13
For he cometh to judge the earth:
He shall judge the world with righteousness,
And the people with his truth.

13. Jehovah comes to establish His righteous rule on earth. The predominant aspect of *judgement* here is not punishment but government, although no doubt government must include punishment (Is. xi. 3, 4). The verse recurs in xcviii. 9; and it is an echo of ix. 8.

and the people with his truth] Rather, **and the peoples in his faithfulness.** Cp. xcii. 2.

The last two lines are omitted in Chron.

PSALM XCVII.

Once more the Psalmist celebrates Jehovah's recent manifestation of His sovereignty. In Ps. xcvi the universality of His kingdom, here the judgement by which it has been manifested, is the prominent thought.

i. Earth is bidden to rejoice at the establishment of Jehovah's kingdom. The awfulness of His Advent, the moral foundation of His rule, and the irresistibleness of His might are described (1—3).

ii. But lately the earth has trembled at His Presence; His righteousness and His majesty have been openly proclaimed (4—6).

iii. The idol-worshippers and their pretended gods are put to shame, while Zion rejoices in His triumph (7—9).

iv. Let Israel respond to His call by dutiful obedience and glad thanksgiving (10—12).

Thus the Psalm consists, like Ps. xcvi, of four equal stanzas. The first two describe the coming of Jehovah to judgement, in symbolic language borrowed from descriptions of the great Theophanies of old; the last two describe its consequences for Israel and for the nations.

The author of this Psalm was not an original poet, but he was a masterly hymn-writer. There is scarcely a phrase in the Psalm which is not borrowed; but he combines the language of earlier Psalmists and Prophets into a "costly mosaic" with a skill which is worthy of the occasion. He makes us feel that he has been deeply moved, and inspired to recognise the greatness of the crisis.

In the LXX the Psalm is entitled (*A Psalm*) *of David, when his land was restored*[1]. The latter part of this title rightly points to the Restoration from Babylon as the occasion of the Psalm.

[1] For καθίσταται, Vulg. restituta est, cf. Is. xlix. 8, τοῦ καταστῆσαι τὴν γῆν

97 The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice;
Let the multitude of isles be glad *thereof.*
2 Clouds and darkness *are* round about him:
Righteousness and judgment *are* the habitation of his throne.
3 A fire goeth before him,
And burneth up his enemies round about.
4 His lightnings enlightened the world:
The earth saw, and trembled.
5 The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD,
At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
6 The heavens declare his righteousness,
And all the people see his glory.

1—3. The proclamation of Jehovah's kingdom of power and righteousness.

1. *The LORD reigneth*] Jehovah hath proclaimed himself King. See note on xciii. 1. For the whole verse cp. xcvi. 10, 11; Is. xlii. 10—12; li. 5.

the multitude of isles] Lit. *many isles*, or, *coastlands*; a favourite word in Is. xl—lxvi; cp. Ps. lxxii. 10. All the many islands and coastlands of the Mediterranean are meant, which have good cause to share Zion's joy at the fall of the tyrant and the rise of the Divine kingdom of righteousness.

2, 3. Though Jehovah shrouds himself in mystery, and comes with irresistible might, it is the consolation of His people to know that His kingdom is founded upon righteousness. Here, as elsewhere (xviii. 9, 11, &c.), the Theophany of Sinai supplies the symbolism. Cp. Ex. xix. 16; xx. 21; Deut. v. 22.

righteousness &c.] Righteousness and judgement are the foundation of his throne (R.V.).

2*b* is taken from Ps. lxxxix. 14*a*: with *v.* 3 cp. Ps. l. 3; Deut. iv. 24; Is. xlii. 25.

4—6. The recent manifestation of Jehovah's power, described in terms of the great Theophanies of old.

4. His lightnings lightened the world, as of old when He brought Israel out of Egypt. From lxxvii. 18*b*.

the earth &c.] Based upon lxxvii. 16, 18: cp. xcvi. 9*b*.

5. From Mic. i. 4; iv. 13; cp. Zech. iv. 14; vi. 5. The dissolution of the most solid and ancient parts of the earth is the expression of its terror and the measure of His power. Cp. Hab. iii. 6.

6. The heavens have declared his righteousness,
And all the peoples have seen his glory.

His faithfulness to His people and His sovereign justice in the punishment of evil have been openly and visibly manifested in the sight of all the world (xcviii. 3). Cp. l. 6; Is. xxxv. 2; xl. 5; lii. 10; lxvi. 18.

Confounded be all they that serve graven images, 7
That boast themselves of idols:
Worship him, all ye gods.
Zion heard, and was glad, 8
And the daughters of Judah rejoiced,
Because of thy judgments, O LORD.
For thou, LORD, *art* High above all the earth: 9
Thou art exalted far above all gods.
Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: 10
He preserveth the souls of his saints;

7—9. The impression produced by the judgement.

7. **Ashamed shall be all that serve graven images**] Dismayed at the impotence of their gods. The Babylonians in particular are meant. Cp. Is. xlii. 17; xliv. 9; Jer. x. 14.

idols] **Things of nought**, as xcvi. 5.

worship him, all ye gods] The A.V. follows the LXX and Jer. in rendering the verb as an imperative, but more probably the words are not an ironical challenge but an assertion, **all gods worship him.** It need not be supposed that the Psalmist regarded the gods of the heathen as having any real existence. The LXX rendering *worship him all his angels* (cp. LXX of viii. 5) may however have been suggested by an unwillingness to seem to countenance such an idea; at the same time it may point to a wider meaning of the Psalmist's words. All supernatural beings, whether really existing or existing only in the minds of their worshippers, must do homage to Jehovah. The quotation in Heb. i. 6 may be taken from this passage or from the LXX expansion of Deut. xxxii. 43.

8. From xlviii. 11, but with a significant change. Then (*v.* 8) the deliverance was wrought in sight of the city; now Zion and the cities of Judah only *hear* the glad tidings brought from distant Babylon to Zion in her humiliation (Is. lii. 7, 8).

9. **For thou, Jehovah, art the Most High above all the earth,**
Thou art exceedingly exalted above all gods.

From lxxxiii. 18; xlvii. 2, 9: cp. xcv. 3.

10—12. The duty and the confidence of Israel.

10. There is no need to alter the text as some modern critics would do, and read, *They that love Jehovah hate evil*; or, *Jehovah loveth those that hate evil*. An exhortation to those who love Jehovah to prove themselves what they profess to be by positive abhorrence of all that is antagonistic to Him was not superfluous, in an age when many an Israelite might still be tempted to half-hearted service. It corresponds to the warning of xcv. 7 ff. For the language of the whole verse cp. Amos v. 15; Ps. xxxvii. 28; xxxiv. 20.

his saints] **His beloved**, or, **his godly ones.** See Appendix, Note I.

He delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.
11 Light is sown for the righteous,
And gladness for the upright in heart.
12 Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous;
And give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

11. *Light is sown*] The idea is rather that of the diffusion of light at the dawn than of a seed sown to bear fruit hereafter. For the metaphor cp. Lucr. ii. 211, "Sol lumine *conserit* arva"; and Verg. *Aen.* iv. 584, "Et iam prima novo *spargebat* lumine terras...Aurora." But most of the Ancient Versions represent the reading, **Light hath arisen for the righteous**, as in cxii. 4 (cp. civ. 22), and this is probably right. So the P.B.V. *There is sprung up a light*, from the LXX through the Vulg. For *light* as a metaphor for happiness and prosperity cp. xxvii. 1; xxxvi. 9.

12. Be glad in Jehovah, ye righteous;
And give thanks unto his holy name.

His holy name, lit. *the memorial of his holiness.* His name is that which brings to remembrance all that He is and does. See Ex. iii. 15; Ps. cxxxv. 13.

The first line is from xxxii. 11 *a*; the second from xxx. 4 *b*.

PSALM XCVIII.

Another anthem of praise for the redemption of Israel from Babylon. It begins and ends like Ps. xcvi, and much of its language is borrowed from Isaiah xl—lxvi. It consists of three equal stanzas. Sing praise to Jehovah for the redemption of Israel (1—3). Let all the earth salute Him as King (4—6); let all Nature rejoice at His Advent (7—9).

This is the only Psalm which bears the title *Mizmōr*, 'A Psalm,' without any addition. The LXX has *A Psalm of David.*

It is fitly appointed as an alternative for the *Magnificat* at Evening Prayer. The hymn of praise for the Redemption of Israel from Babylon becomes in the mouth of the Christian Church a hymn of praise for the Redemption of the world.

A Psalm.

98 O sing unto the LORD a new song;
For he hath done marvellous *things:*
His right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.

1—3. Praise Jehovah for the glorious salvation which He has wrought.

1. *O sing unto the* LORD *a new song*] So xcvi. 1 *a*.
marvellous things] Cp. xcvi. 3 *b*.
his **own** *right hand, and his holy arm,* **hath wrought salvation for**

The LORD hath made known his salvation: 2
His righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.
He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the 3
house of Israel:
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: 4
Make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing *praise.*
Sing unto the LORD with the harp; 5
With the harp, and the voice of a psalm.
With trumpets and sound of cornet 6
Make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King.

him] He needed no help: His own might was all-sufficient to deliver Israel from Babylon. Cp. Is. lii. 10; lix. 16; lxiii. 5; Ps. xliv. 3. The restoration from the Exile was a second Exodus, and this 'new song' is an echo of the ancient 'Song of Moses.' Cp. Ex. xv. 2, 6, 11, 12.

2. **Jehovah hath made known his salvation:**
In the sight of the nations hath he revealed his righteousness.

Cp. Is. lvi. 1. The juxtaposition of *salvation* and *righteousness* is characteristic of Is. xl—lxvi. The deliverance of Israel is the outcome and the visible manifestation of Jehovah's faithfulness to His covenant. Cp. Ps. lxxi. 15.

3. *He hath remembered*] Though Israel in its despair said, "Jehovah hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me" (Is. xlix. 14), the confidence of the earlier prophet (Mic. vii. 20) was not misplaced.

his mercy and his truth] **His lovingkindness and his faithfulness.** Cp. lxxxix. 1 ff.; xcii. 2; Luke i. 54.

all the ends &c.] The prediction of Is. lii. 10 has been fulfilled.

4—6. Let all the earth salute its King.

4. **Shout unto Jehovah, all the earth;**
Break forth and sing for joy, yea, make melody.

Salute Jehovah with the gladsome shouts and music and blare of trumpets (*v.* 6) and clapping of hands (*v.* 8) which are the proper greeting for a king upon his accession. See on Ps. xlvii. 1, 5—8; xcv. 1, 2; and cp. 1 Sam. x. 24; 1 Kings i. 39; 2 Kings xi. 12, 14.

Break forth and sing for joy is from Is. lii. 9: cp. xliv. 23; xlix. 13; liv. 1.

5. **Make melody unto Jehovah with the harp:**
With the harp and the sound of melody.

Cp. Is. li. 3.

6. The 'trumpet' was a straight metal tube, like the sacred trumpets represented on the arch of Titus: the 'cornet' was originally a ram's horn,

7 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein.
8 Let the floods clap *their* hands:
Let the hills be joyful together
9 Before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth:
With righteousness shall he judge the world,
And the people with equity.

perhaps in later times a metal instrument of the same shape. See the illustrations in Driver's *Joel and Amos* in this Series, p. 144.

7—9. Let universal Nature swell the chorus of rejoicing.

7. **Let the sea thunder,** as xcvi. 11*b*.
the world &c.] From xxiv. 1.
8. **Let the rivers clap their hands;**
Let the mountains sing for joy together.
Cp. Is. lv. 12; and for the prosopopoeia, Hab. iii. 10.
9. Cp. xcvi. 13.

PSALM XCIX.

Jehovah's fresh proclamation of His sovereignty is once more the initial watchword, as in Pss. xciii and xcvii (cp. xcvi. 10), and doubtless this Psalm belongs to the same period. Its distinctive idea is expressed in the threefold refrain (*vv.* 3, 5, 9). It is a call to all nations, and especially to His own people, to worship Jehovah as the thrice Holy God. The unceasing adoration which is evoked in heaven by the contemplation of the absolute moral perfection of God (Is. vi. 3) should find an echo upon earth.

The Psalm consists of three stanzas: the refrain in *vv.* 3, 5, 9 may possibly have been intended to be sung as a liturgical response.

The universal sovereignty of Jehovah who has established His throne in Zion (1—3); the righteous character of His rule in Israel (4, 5); and His faithfulness in His dealings with His people manifested in their history (6—9), are successively celebrated; and each stanza ends with a call to worship and extol Him as the Holy God; the first (3) addressed to the nations, the second and third (5, 9) to Israel.

99 The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble:
He sitteth *between* the cherubims; let the earth be moved.

1—3. Jehovah has proclaimed Himself King in Zion: let all the earth worship this Holy God.

1. **Jehovah hath proclaimed himself King; the peoples tremble:**
Even he that sitteth enthroned upon the cherubim; the earth shaketh.

The LORD *is* great in Zion;
And he *is* high above all the people.
Let them praise thy great and terrible name; 2
For it *is* holy. 3

The king's strength also loveth judgment; 4
Thou dost establish equity,
Thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob.
Exalt ye the LORD our God,
And worship at his footstool; 5
For he *is* holy.

Moses and Aaron among his priests, 6

When Jehovah manifests His sovereignty the nations must needs tremble with awe (Is. lxiv. 2), and all the earth must confess His majesty (Ps. lxxvii. 18). The title *he that sitteth enthroned upon the cherubim* (lxxx. 1) suggests the thought that He Who is supremely exalted in heaven has yet in time past condescended to dwell among His people on earth (1 Sam. iv. 4; 2 Sam. vi. 2; 2 Kings xix. 15).

2. Jehovah is great in Zion;
And he is high above all the peoples.

Zion is the seat of His universal sovereignty on earth. Cp. xlviii. 1; Is. lvii. 15.

3. *thy great and terrible name*] Cp. xlvii. 2; cxi. 9; Deut. vii. 21.
for *it* is *holy*] A possible rendering; cp. Is. lvii. 15; but the parallels of *vv.* 5, 9 point rather to the rendering of R.V., **Holy is he.** His highest claim to adoration is His absolute moral perfection. Cp. xxii. 3 note.

4, 5. The righteous character of Jehovah's kingdom.

4. *The king's strength also loveth judgment*] The construction of this clause is doubtful, but this is the simplest way of taking it. The objection that *strength* cannot properly be said to love is prosaic. The rendering, **And the strength of a king who loveth judgement hast thou established in equity,** is possible but cumbrous. The king is Jehovah Himself (cp. Is. lxi. 8). THOU is emphatic: it is He Himself Who has established a kingdom of righteousness, fulfilling the ideal of the Davidic kingdom (Is. xvi. 5): and by the recent deliverance of Israel He has given proof of its character.

5. *his footstool*] In 1 Chr. xxviii. 2 the Ark is called Jehovah's footstool, and so too probably in Ps. cxxxii. 7; but as there was no Ark in the Second Temple, the Temple itself must be meant here, or possibly (cp. *v.* 9) Zion. Cp. Lam. ii. 1; Is. lx. 13; lxvi. 1 (of the earth).
for *he* is *holy*] **Holy is he.**

6—9. The holiness of Jehovah demonstrated by His dealings with Israel.

Two interpretations of these verses deserve consideration. (1) They

And Samuel among them that call upon his name;
They called upon the LORD, and he answered them.

may be understood, as in the A.V., as a historical retrospect, offered for the encouragement and warning of Israel of the restoration. Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, were prevailing intercessors in past time. God revealed Himself to His people, answering their prayers, but punishing while He pardoned, in order to demonstrate His holiness. That history, it is implied, will be repeated. God will still answer prayer, and reveal Himself to Israel; but when Israel sins and forgets that Jehovah is a Holy God, He must needs punish even when He pardons.

(2) They may however be taken to refer to the present, thus:

6. A Moses and an Aaron are among his priests,
And a Samuel among those that call upon his name:
When they call unto Jehovah, HE answereth them.
7. In the pillar of cloud he speaketh unto them,
When they keep his testimonies, and the statute which he hath given them.
8. Jehovah our God, THOU hast answered them:
A pardoning God hast thou proved thyself unto them,
But an avenger of their doings withal.

Before the captivity Jehovah had said (Jer. xv. 1), "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people." But now He has relented. Intercessors like those of old have been found among His faithful servants: He has still continued to reveal Himself to Israel as He did of old in the wilderness. And now he has answered their prayers by the deliverance of His people from Babylon. They have been forgiven, though they have had to bear the punishment of their sins.

The general purport of the verses is the same, whichever view is adopted; but the second interpretation appears to be preferable, as bringing them into a closer relation to the occasion of the Psalm.

The notion that Moses Aaron and Samuel are spoken of as still interceding in heaven, like Onias and Jeremiah in 2 Macc. xv. 12 ff., is wholly improbable.

6. It was the office of the priests to intercede and mediate between God and man. This priestly function was exercised by Moses when Israel was fighting with Amalek (Ex. xvii. 11 ff.), when they sinned by worshipping the calf (Ex. xxxii. 30 ff.; Deut. ix. 18 ff.), and when they murmured on the return of the spies (Num. xiv. 13 ff.). It is to such occasions as these that the Psalmist refers, rather than to his exercise of priestly functions in the ratification of the covenant at Sinai (Ex. xxiv. 6 f.), or in the dedication of the Tabernacle (Ex. xl. 22 ff.), or in the consecration of Aaron and his sons (Lev. viii). For an example of Aaron's mediation see Num. xvi. 46 ff. Samuel too was famous for the prevailing efficacy of his prayers. See 1 Sam. vii. 8, 9; xii. 16 ff.; and cp. Ecclus. xlvi. 16. In the clause **when they call** &c. all true Israelites seem to be included.

He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: 7
They kept his testimonies, and the ordinance *that* he gave them.
Thou answeredst them, O LORD our God: 8
Thou wast a God that forgavest them,
Though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.
Exalt the LORD our God, 9
And worship at his holy hill;
For the LORD our God *is* holy.

7. He reveals Himself once more as He spoke to His people of old by the mediation of Moses. See Ex. xxxiii. 7 ff. The second line virtually expresses the condition of prevailing prayer—obedience to the revealed will of God.

8. A pardoning God &c.] The reference here must be to the whole nation. This is the lesson which its history has taught it concerning God's character. If He pardons in answer to prayer, He must still vindicate His holiness by chastisement, lest men should imagine that He makes light of sin. See Ex. xxxiv. 7; Num. xiv. 20 ff.; and the prophet's touching identification of himself with the guilty people in Mic. vii. 9 ff.

9. A final call to worship the God of Israel in Zion, in His holy mountain (ii. 6; Is. lxvi. 20), for holy is Jehovah our God.

PSALM C.

"Moreover the strangers...will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer...for my house shall be called an house of prayer for all the peoples" (Is. lvi. 6, 7). The invitation of this Psalm corresponds to the prediction of the prophet: and the series of anthems for the dedication of the restored Temple which begins in Ps. xcv with a call to Israel to worship ends fitly with a call to the whole earth to join in Israel's worship, acknowledging Jehovah as the only true God, Whose claims upon the allegiance of the whole world have been attested by His recent mercy to Israel. Verses 1, 2, 4, are an echo of xcv. 1, 2; *v.* 3 of xcv. 7; and parallels to most of the language are to be found in the other Psalms of this group.

The liturgical history of this Psalm is of special interest. The title should probably be rendered **A Psalm for the thankoffering** (R.V. marg.), rather than simply *A Psalm of thanksgiving* (R.V.). It refers to the use of the Psalm in the Second Temple in connexion with the sacrifices of thanksgiving (Lev. vii. 11 ff.). For similar notices see the titles of Pss. xxxviii, lxx, xcii. The general character of its contents makes it probable that it was not specially written for the purpose, but adopted on account of *v.* 4.

From ancient times it has been used in the daily service of the Synagogue, except upon certain festivals. It was used in the early morning service of Lauds, and at the revision of the Prayer Book in 1552 it was added as an alternative for the *Benedictus*. The metrical version of it, universally known and loved as the "Old Hundredth" (i.e from the *old* Version of the Psalms by Sternhold and Hopkins), first appeared in the Psalter published in London by John Daye, 1560–1, and in the *Anglo-Genevan Psalter*, printed at Geneva in 1561. Its author is believed to have been William Kethe, a native of Scotland, who was forced to fly during the Marian persecutions, and joined the exiles at Geneva in 1556. The tune is found in the French-Genevan Psalter of 1551 as the tune to Ps. cxxxiv. See Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology*, pp. 43, 44.

A Psalm of praise.

100 Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.
2 Serve the LORD with gladness:
Come before his presence with singing.
3 Know ye that the LORD he *is* God:
It is he *that* hath made us, and not we ourselves;
We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

1. Shout unto Jehovah, all the earth, (as in xcviii. 4; lxvi. 1), greeting Him as King. See note on xcviii. 4. Render, as A.V. there and in lxvi. 1, **all the earth**, not *all ye lands*. In the worship of Jehovah mankind is to regain its lost unity.

2. *Serve*] The homage of worship takes the place of the homage of submission (ii. 11); and now the nations can draw near with joy instead of fear.

singing] Cp. xcv. 1; xcviii. 4.

3. **Know that Jehovah is God:**
He it is that made us, and we are his,
His people and the sheep of his pasture.

Learn from the works that He has wrought for Israel that Jehovah is the only true God. Cp. xlvi. 10; Deut. vii. 9. He *made* Israel of old to be a people for Himself (Deut. xxxii. 6, 15; Ps. xcv. 6), and now He has once more made them a nation (Is. lx. 21). In spite of their sins He has not disowned them; they can still with confidence claim His care and guidance.

The A.V. *and not we ourselves* follows the *K'thībh*, which is supported by the LXX, Syr., and Symm. The A.V. marg. and R.V. *we are his*, follow the *Q'rē*, which is supported by the Targ., Jer., and Aq.[1] Though the antithesis *he and not we ourselves* gives a good sense, the

[1] The Heb. words for *not* and *to him* (=his) are pronounced identically (*lō*) though differently spelt (לֹא, לוֹ): hence the confusion between the readings *not we* and *to him we=his (are) we* was easy.

Enter *into* his gates with thanksgiving,
And into his courts with praise:
Be thankful unto him, *and* bless his name.
For the LORD *is* good; his mercy *is* everlasting;
And his truth *endureth* to all generations.

reading *we are his* is far more significant, as adding a fresh thought. Moreover it agrees best with the construction of the verse in the Heb., and it is supported by the parallels in xcv. 7; Is. xliii. 1, cp. xliii. 21, xliv. 2.

4. *thanksgiving*] The parallelism of *praise* in the next line is decidedly in favour of this rendering: still the parallel in xcvi. 8 justifies the alternative rendering of R.V. marg., *a thank offering*.

be thankful] **Give thanks.** Cp. xcvii. 12; and for *bless his name*, cp. xcvi. 2.

5. For Jehovah is good;
His lovingkindness (endureth) for ever;
And his faithfulness unto generation after generation.

Israel's fresh experience of the untiring goodness and love and faithfulness of Jehovah is an argument which should win all the nations to His service.

Vv. 4, 5 are based on Jer. xxxiii. 11, cp. Ps. lxxxix. 1. "Give thanks unto Jehovah, for he is good; for his lovingkindness endureth for ever," became a standing liturgical formula after the exile. See note on cvi. 1.

PSALM CI.

In this noble Psalm a ruler addresses Jehovah. He solemnly professes his resolve to banish all baseness from his own heart, and to expel all wrong-doers from his presence, that he may be worthy to receive Jehovah as his guest, and that Jehovah's city may be worthy of its name.

Can we accept the title which attributes the Psalm to David, and find in it the expression of lofty purpose and noble aspiration which animated him when he was contemplating the transfer of the Ark to Zion? At any rate the Psalm is worthy of the man after God's own heart, and that episode in his life offers a natural explanation of its origin.

When the stern punishment of Uzzah's irreverence enforced the lesson of Jehovah's awful holiness, David exclaimed in terror, "How shall the Ark of Jehovah come unto me?" (2 Sam. vi. 9), and the Ark was carried aside into the house of Obed-Edom. But terror was soon exchanged for that earnest longing for Jehovah's Presence in the city of His choice which finds utterance in the cry, "Oh when wilt thou come unto me?", and the Ark was brought up into the city of David. This Psalm then may be regarded as the expression of David's solemn resolution to prepare himself and his city for Jehovah's coming to dwell in

their midst. It is a companion piece to Ps. xv, which describes the character required in those who were to dwell in the immediate Presence of Jehovah, and Ps. xxiv, composed in all probability for the translation of the Ark; and it should further be compared with Ps. xviii. 20 ff., and with "the last words of David" in 2 Sam. xxiii. 1 ff.

No doubt it might have been expected that such a Psalm, if really written by David, would have been included in one of the earlier collections; but it would be rash to assert that this *must* have been the case. Davidic Psalms may have been preserved elsewhere than in these collections until after the Exile; and the compiler of this book may have placed this Psalm here after the group of "accession Psalms" which celebrate the re-establishment of Jehovah's kingdom, in order to suggest how that kingdom might be made a reality for Jerusalem under the sway of a true ruler, some second David, whose kingdom would be based upon the principles of the Divine government (xcix. 4).

The resemblance of some phrases to the language of the Book of Proverbs has been urged as evidence of a much later date. But the resemblances are not such as to prove that the Psalm is dependent on that Book in its present form. Much of the teaching of the Proverbs must have been current orally long before they were collected and reduced to writing.

Various conjectures have been suggested as to the authorship of the Psalm by commentators who think that it must be later than David. It has been attributed to Hezekiah, Josiah, the Maccabaean princes Jonathan (1 Macc. ix. 28 ff.) and Simon (1 Macc. xiv. 14). It has even been regarded (in defiance of the natural meaning of *v.* 6) as the utterance not of an individual ruler, but of the post-exilic community in Jerusalem.

This Psalm has been called "David's mirror for rulers," "the prince's Psalm," "a mirror for magistrates," and the like. It was "beloved by the noblest of Russian princes, Vladimir Monomachos; by the gentlest of English Reformers, Nicholas Ridley" (Stanley). The story is told of Ernest the Pious, Duke of Saxe-Gotha, that he sent an unfaithful minister a copy of this Psalm, and it became a proverbial saying in the country when a minister was guilty of misconduct, "He will soon get the princes' Psalm to read" (Delitzsch). It is naturally appointed as one of the Proper Psalms in the Service for the Day of the Sovereign's Accession.

It consists of two equal divisions: *vv.* 1—4 contain the Psalmist's resolutions for the conduct of his own life: *vv.* 5—8 declare his intention of banishing pride and falsehood and injustice from his court, and surrounding himself with faithful ministers.

A Psalm of David.

101 I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O LORD, will I sing.

1—4. By purity of purpose and integrity of heart David is resolved to prepare for Jehovah's coming to dwell with him.

1. *I will sing of mercy and judgment*] **Lovingkindness and judge-**

I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when 2
wilt thou come unto me?
I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.
I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: 3
I hate the work of them that turn aside; *it* shall not
cleave to me.
A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know 4
a wicked *person.*

ment are characteristics of the Divine rule (lxxxix. 14), which are to be reflected in the true human ruler (Is. xvi. 5). They are the fundamental principles of right life and conduct, the bond of fellowship between man and God (Hos. ii. 19), and between man and his fellowman (Hos. xii. 6; Mic. vi. 8; Matt. xxiii. 23). If in these opening words the Psalmist is referring to the Divine attributes which are the archetype and model for human conduct, he passes on at once to speak of their imitation and embodiment in his own life and the life of his courtiers.

unto thee &c.] **Unto thee, Jehovah, will I make melody** (lvii. 7).

2. *I will behave myself wisely* &c.] This is a possible rendering: but the words may mean, **I will give heed unto the way of integrity**, deliberately and of set purpose make whole-hearted devotion to God and perfect uprightness towards men the rule of my conduct. Cp. *v.* 6; xv. 2.

O when &c.] The appeal of earnest longing, eager for closer fellowship with God. It recalls David's words in 2 Sam. vi. 9, and may possibly be an allusion to the promise of Ex. xx. 24. Obedience to God's commandments is the condition of such a fellowship (John xiv. 23).

within my house] Even in the privacy of my own palace, I will order my conduct **in the integrity of my heart**. Cp. xviii. 23; lxxviii. 72; Prov. xx. 7. "The recesses of an Eastern palace were often foul with lust, and hid extravagances of caprice and self-indulgence; but this ruler will behave there as one who has Jehovah for a guest" (Maclaren).

3. I will set no base thing before mine eyes (R.V.), as an aim to be accomplished, or an example to be imitated. Lit. *matter of belial*, i.e. *worthlessness*. Cp. Deut. xv. 9.

the work of them that turn aside] Or, more probably, **the practice of depravities**.

it *shall not cleave to me*] "If it seized on him unawares, he would shake it off as an accursed thing; Deut. xiii. 17" (Kay).

4. The Psalmist is still speaking of himself. All crookedness and perversity shall be banished from his heart, he will not consciously tolerate evil there. Render the second line, **Evil I will not know**. With 4 *a* and 2 *b* cp. Prov. xi. 20.

froward] Lit. *crooked*. Cp. Prov. xi. 20.

5 Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off:
Him that hath a high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.
6 Mine eyes *shall be* upon the faithful of the land, that *they* may dwell with me:
He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.
7 He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house:
He that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.
8 I will early destroy all the wicked of the land;
That *I* may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD.

5—8. He will not tolerate falsehood and pride and injustice around him, but will seek to fill his court with faithful ministers.

5. *him will I cut off*] Or, destroy, as in *v.* 8 *a*, as in himself evil and moreover an evil counsellor for a king.

a high look] The visible token of a haughty heart within (xviii. 27; Prov. xxi. 4).

6. He is ever on the look out for men of probity and integrity to be his companions and confidential ministers.

he shall serve me] He shall minister unto me (R.V.).

7. *he that telleth lies* &c.] He that speaketh falsehood shall not be established in my presence.

8. Morning by morning will I destroy all the wicked of the land;
That I may cut off all workers of iniquity from the city of Jehovah.

Day by day the king will hold his court of justice in the morning (2 Sam. xv. 2; Jer. xxi. 12), that he may purge Jerusalem of evil and make it a holy city, worthy of its high title 'the city of Jehovah.' Cp. xlvi. 4; xlviii. 1, 8; Is. i. 26.

PSALM CII.

The Psalmist supplicates for a speedy hearing (1, 2), for his strength is wasted till he is on the very edge of the grave. He is a solitary mourner, exposed to the ribald mockery of his enemies. His sufferings are a divinely inflicted chastisement (3—11). From *vv.* 13 ff. the cause of his sorrow appears. His people are in exile; Zion is desolate.

But in contrast to his own transitoriness rises the thought of God's eternity, and that eternity is the guarantee for the restoration of Zion. That restoration will be a manifestation of Jehovah's glory which will attract all nations to His service, and evoke the grateful praise of all future generations, when Jerusalem has become the centre of the world's worship (12—22).

Though he cannot forget his own sufferings, and prays that he may be spared a premature death, he finds rest in the thought of the eternity and unchangeableness of Jehovah, Who will not fail His faithful people (23—28).

Who is the speaker? Israel, or an individual Israelite? Many commentators regard the Psalm as the utterance of the nation, and in many respects it seems to go beyond the experience of an individual. But this theory does not do justice to its intensity of personal feeling, and is hard to reconcile with much of its language. It is more natural to regard it as the utterance of an individual, while at the same time it is more than this. The poet is one into whose heart the sorrows of the nation have entered so deeply that he feels them all his own. The strong sense of solidarity which was characteristic of ancient Israel finds expression here. If the nation suffered every member suffered with it. He almost loses his own personality in that of his people. And he speaks not for himself alone, but for the whole body of his fellow-countrymen in exile. Comp. *Introd.* pp. li ff.

We can hardly be wrong in assigning this Psalm to the closing years of the exile in Babylon. Zion is in ruins, but the appointed time for Jehovah to have compassion on her is come (*vv.* 13, 14). The Psalmist looks for the fulfilment of the prophecies of Jeremiah and Isaiah xl—lxvi, and prays that he may be spared to witness the restoration of Israel with his own eyes (*vv.* 23, 24). Cheyne indeed places it in the time of Nehemiah, on the ground of the resemblance of *v.* 14 to the description of the ruins of Jerusalem in Neh. ii. 11—20, iv. 2. But the Psalm seems to premise that no restoration has yet taken place. The perfects in *vv.* 16, 17, 19 are certainly relative perfects, denoting what will have taken place before events still future have occurred.

The Psalm is full of echoes of Is. xl—lxvi, and of other Psalms, in particular xxii, lxix, lxxix.

The title is unique. It refers to the devotional use of the Ps., not to the occasion of its composition. It is an appropriate *prayer of* (or *for*) *the afflicted, when he fainteth* (lxi. 2), *and poureth out his complaint before Jehovah* (lxii. 8; lv. 2; lxiv. 1; cxlii. 2; 1 Sam. i. 15, 16), finding relief for his overburdened soul in appeal to God.

It is one of the seven 'Penitential Psalms' (vi, xxxii, xxxviii, li, cii, cxxx, cxliii), and is a Proper Psalm for Ash-Wednesday.

A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the LORD.

Hear my prayer, O LORD, 102
And let my cry come unto thee.
Hide not thy face from me 2

1—11. The Psalmist supplicates for a speedy hearing, pleading the extremity of his distress.

1, 2. The Psalmist's prayer is not the less real because it is expressed in familiar phrases from older Psalms. *Hear my prayer, Jehovah,* is from xxxix. 12; *and let my cry for help come unto thee* is suggested by

In the day *when* I am in trouble; incline thine ear
unto me:
In the day *when* I call answer me speedily.
3 For my days are consumed like smoke,
And my bones are burnt as a hearth.
4 My heart is smitten, and withered like grass;
So that I forget to eat my bread.
5 By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave
to my skin.
6 I am like a pelican of the wilderness:
I am like an owl of the desert.

xviii. 6. *Hide not thy face from me* is taken from xxvii. 9, *in the day of my distress* from lix. 16; *incline thine ear unto me* from xxxi. 2; *in the day when I call* from lvi. 9, *answer me speedily* from lxix. 17.

3. *like smoke*] Or, *in smoke*, a natural figure for speedy and complete disappearance. Cp. xxxvii. 20; James iv. 14.

are burnt as a hearth] Rather (cp. P.B.V. and R.V.), **burn as a firebrand**. He compares himself to a sick man whose strength is being consumed by the burning heat of fever. Cp. xxii. 15; Jer. xx. 9.

4. My heart is smitten like grass, and withered;
Yea, I forget to eat my bread.

His heart, the centre of vital force and vigour, is dried up like a plant struck by the fierce heat of the sun and withered (cxxi. 6; Hos. ix. 16). Sorrow and sickness have deprived him of all appetite for food. Cp. 1 Sam. i. 7, 8; Job xxxiii. 20.

5. If the A.V. is retained, the verse will describe the state of emaciation to which he has been reduced by continued sorrow. Cp. Lam. iv. 8. But though the cognate Arabic word means *skin*, it is doubtful whether the Heb. word *bāsār* can bear this sense. Usage requires the rendering of R.V., 'my bones cleave **to my flesh**,' which means apparently that his limbs are swollen and stiff. The phrase seems to be borrowed from Job xix. 20, "my bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh," where Job describes his limbs as partly emaciated, partly abnormally swollen, and stiff with disease. The curious rendering of the P.B.V. "*my bones* [Coverdale, *bone*] will scarce cleave to my flesh," comes from the Zürich Version:—"Vor geschrey mines seufftzens mag mein gebeyn kum an meinem fleysch hangen."

6. He compares himself to solitude-loving birds which haunt desolate places and ruins, uttering weird and mournful cries. Cp. Is. xxxiv. 11; Zeph. ii. 14 (A.V. *cormorant*). Render the second line, **I am become as an owl in desolate places**. The owl is called by the Arabs "mother of ruins," and "in the tombs or on the ruins, among the desolate heaps which mark the sites of ancient Judah, on the sandy mounds of Beersheba, or on the spray-beaten fragments of Tyre, his low wailing note is sure to be heard at sunset." Tristram's *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 194.

I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop. 7
Mine enemies reproach me all the day; 8
And they that are mad against me are sworn against me.
For I have eaten ashes like bread, 9
And mingled my drink with weeping,
Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: 10
For thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.
My days *are* like a shadow that declineth; 11
And I am withered like grass.

But thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever; 12

7. I keep vigil, and am become
Like a solitary bird upon the housetop.

His nights are sleepless: he spends them like "the moping owl" in mournful complaints. Some solitary, nocturnal bird is clearly meant, perhaps some kind of owl, or according to Tristram (*Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 202), the Blue Thrush. Cp. Verg. *Aen.* iv. 462,

"Solaque culminibus ferali carmine bubo
Visa queri, et longas in fletum ducere voces."

For *am become* we should perhaps read *and moan* (ואהגה for ואהיה). Cp. Is. lix. 11.

8. His enemies aggravate his sufferings by mocking him as one forsaken by God (xlii. 10; xliv. 13).

are sworn against me] Rather as R.V., **do curse by me**; using my name in formulas of execration, 'God make thee like yonder miserable wretch.' Cp. Is. lxv. 15; Jer. xxix. 22.

9. They may well do so; for what can be more wretched than his plight? Mourning and tears are as it were his food and drink. Cp. xlii. 3; lxxx. 5. For ashes as the symbol of mourning, cp. Job ii. 8; Lam. iii. 16; Ezek. xxvii. 30.

10. This suffering is the punishment of sin. The storm of God's wrath has swept Israel away from its own land, and flung it down helpless in the land of exile. *Thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down* (A.V.) has been taken to mean that the bitterness of Israel's present humiliation is intensified by the recollection of its past exaltation (cp. Lam. ii. 1), but it suits the context better to render **For thou hast taken me up and flung me away**, a metaphor from a hurricane. Cp. Job xxvii. 21; xxx. 22; Is. lxiv. 6. The same word is used of the banishment of Israel in Jer. vii. 15, &c.

11. *like a shadow that declineth*] Or, **like a shadow stretched out** (Jer. vi. 4) towards evening, and about to disappear altogether as the sun sinks below the horizon.

I am withered like grass] Rather, **I am withering away like grass**. The common emblem for frail and transitory mortality. Cp. Is. xl. 7; James i. 11.

12—22. From the thought of his own frailty and transitoriness he

And thy remembrance unto all generations.
13 Thou shalt arise, *and* have mercy upon Zion:
For the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.
14 For thy servants take pleasure in her stones,
And favour the dust thereof.
15 So the heathen shall fear the name of the LORD,
And all the kings of the earth thy glory.
16 When the LORD shall build up Zion,
He shall appear in his glory.

turns to the eternal sovereignty of Jehovah, which is the sure pledge for Zion's restoration.

12. **But thou, Jehovah, shalt sit enthroned for ever;**
And thy memorial shall be for generation after generation.

The verse is taken from Lam. v. 19, with the substitution of *memorial* for *throne*. The thought in which the Psalmist takes refuge is not merely Jehovah's eternity ('shalt abide'), but Jehovah's eternal sovereignty (ix. 7). The NAME which is His memorial to one generation after another (Ex. iii. 15) is the pledge and expression of that sovereign rule. "I will be that I will be," ever revealing Myself as the Living God, working out My plan in the history of the world. Such as He revealed Himself to be in the Exodus, He must continue to be for all time.

13. Since He thus rules, He must have compassion on Zion in accordance with His promise, **for it is time to have pity on her, yea the set time is come.** Cp. Is. xxx. 18; xlix. 13; Jer. xxx. 18; xxxi. 20; Zech. i. 12. The appointed time for the end of the exile was now at hand. Cp. Jer. xxix. 10; Is. xl. 2; Hab. ii. 3.

14. **For thy servants have affection for her stones,**
And for her dust are they moved with pity.

Another argument to move Jehovah's compassion. His servants look with yearning love towards Zion in its ruin. Even the broken stones and scattered heaps of rubbish which are all that remain of it are very dear to them. The language resembles that of Sanballat's contemptuous taunt: "Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish?" Heb. *dust*, Neh. iv. 2; cp. *v.* 10, "there is much rubbish," Heb. *dust*.

15. *So the* nations &c.] The restoration of Zion will be the prelude to the conversion of the world. God's manifestation of His power and His faithfulness towards His people will win the homage of all the nations. This is a fundamental thought in Is. xl—lxvi. See especially lix. 19; lx. 3.

16, 17. **When Jehovah hath built up Zion,**
Hath appeared in his glory,
Hath turned to the prayer of the destitute,
And not despised their prayer.

These verses are in close connexion with *v.* 15. The nations will pay homage to Jehovah, when He has manifested His glory in the redemp-

He will regard the prayer of the destitute,
And not despise their prayer.
This shall be written for the generation to come: 18
And the people which *shall be* created shall praise the LORD.
For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; 19
From heaven did the LORD behold the earth;
To hear the groaning of the prisoner; 20
To loose those that are appointed to death;
To declare the name of the LORD in Zion, 21
And his praise in Jerusalem;
When the people are gathered together, 22
And the kingdoms, to serve the LORD.

tion of His people. *The destitute* or *forlorn* is Israel in exile. With *v.* 17 generally cp. xxii. 24; lxix. 33.

18. The good news of Jehovah's mercy shall be recorded as the theme for the grateful praises of future generations. Cp. Jer. xxx. 2. The restoration of Israel will be nothing less than a new creation. Cp. Is. xliii. 7, 21; Ps. xxii. 31.

shall praise the LORD] Heb. **Jah.** Here first in the Psalter we have the combination of words which forms the characteristic call to worship in the post-exilic Psalms, *Hallelujah*, 'Praise ye Jah.'

19. **Because** *he hath looked down*...**hath beheld**] In answer to the prayer of Is. lxiii. 15. Cp. also Deut. xxvi. 15; Ps. xiv. 2; xxxiii. 13. This verse is related to *v.* 18 as *vv.* 16, 17 are to *v.* 15. The perfect tense denotes what will lie in the past when the time referred to in *v.* 18 is reached. Jehovah had not yet 'looked down' upon His people when the Psalmist was writing; this is clear from *v.* 13; but He will assuredly do so, and His renewed regard will be the occasion and theme for their thanksgiving.

20. An echo of the prayer in lxxix. 11. Cp. Is. xlii. 7; lxi. 1. Israel in exile is compared to a condemned captive languishing in prison, and doomed to perish if Jehovah does not speedily interpose.

the groaning of the prisoner] R.V. **the sighing of the prisoner**, as in lxxix. 11.

those that are appointed to death] Lit. *the sons of death.* Cp. 1 Sam. xx. 31 (marg.). The word for *death* is a form found only here and in Ps. lxxix. 11.

21. *To declare*] R.V. **That men may declare**: either the returned exiles or the assembled nations, or in the widest sense, both together.

22. *the people*] R.V. **the peoples.** Israel does not return alone: its restoration will be the signal for that gathering of the nations to worship Jehovah in Zion, which ancient prophecy had foretold (Is. ii. 2 ff. = Mic. iv. 1 ff.), and which recent prophecy had uncompromisingly reaffirmed in the teeth of appearances (Is. lx. 3 ff.). Cp. Ps. xxii. 27.

23 He weakened my strength in the way;
He shortened my days.
24 I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days:
Thy years *are* throughout all generations.
25 Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth:
And the heavens *are* the work of thy hands.
26 They shall perish, but thou shalt endure:
Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment;
As a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed:

But did not the event, it may be asked, fall far short of the anticipations of prophet and Psalmist? They looked for a triumphant return of Israel and a visible manifestation of Jehovah's glory, to be followed immediately by the submission of the nations. As a matter of fact the return was an insignificant event, and no startling results immediately followed it. The answer is twofold. The spiritual significance of the Return for the history of the world could not be exaggerated; and prophecy constantly combines in one view the nearer and the remoter future, depicting the eventual result, without indicating the steps by which it is to be reached.

23—28. From the contemplation of the glorious future the Psalmist returns to the present, and takes up the thought of *v.* 11.

23, 24. He hath brought down my strength in the way;
He hath shortened my days.
I will say, O my God &c.

Life has been a toilsome journey for him; he is prematurely old; but he deprecates an untimely death. He would fain survive to see with his own eyes the glory which he knows is to be revealed. Cp. lxxxix. 47, note. The contrast of God's eternal years adds pathos to the thought of the brevity of his own life, yet at the same time that eternity is the guarantee for His faithfulness to His people.

My strength is the traditional reading (*Q'rē*), which is supported by most of the Versions. The written text (*K'thībh*) has *his strength*, which must be rendered, *He hath afflicted* me with *his strength*; or, *His strength hath brought* me *down*. But the *Q'rē* gives a better sense.

24. *I will say* introduces the prayer which follows with additional emphasis. Cp. Job x. 2.

in the midst of my days] Cp. lv. 23; Is. xxxviii. 10.

thy years &c.] The eternity of God is contrasted with the transitoriness of man as in *vv.* 12, 11.

26. Compared with man's brief span of life the natural world is an emblem of permanence; compared with God's eternity, it is seen to be transitory. He existed from all eternity before it, and called it into being: He will exist unchanged when it has passed away.

they shall be changed] Or, pass away. The Psalmist's thought here is

But thou *art* the same,
And thy years shall have no end.
The children of thy servants shall continue,
And their seed shall be established before thee.

rather of the transitoriness of heaven and earth contrasted with the eternity of God than of the new heavens and new earth, Is. lxv. 17; lxvi. 22.

27. *thou* art *the same*] Lit., as in Deut. xxxii. 39; Is. xli. 4; xliii. 10, 13; xlvi. 4; xlviii. 12, Thou art He, an emphatic assertion of the personality of Jehovah, which is in its very nature unchanging.

vv. 25—27 are quoted in Heb. i. 10—12, from the LXX, and applied to Christ. The Psalmist is addressing Jehovah, Whom he expects to manifest Himself as the Redeemer of Israel. As the mystery of the Godhead was disclosed in the progress of revelation, it was seen that the words might be applied with equal right to the Eternal Word through Whom all things were made, and Who was manifested for the redemption of the world.

28. The eternity of God is the pledge for the permanence of His people. Even if the Psalmist and his contemporaries do not live to see the restoration of Israel, their descendants will have part in it. The verse is an echo of Is. lxv. 9; lxvi. 22: cp. Ps. lxix. 35, 36.

shall continue] Lit. shall dwell, in the land once more (Is. lxv. 9; Ps. lxix. 36).

before thee] Or, in thy presence. 'Banish them from my presence' was the sentence pronounced upon Judah as upon Israel (Jer. vii. 15; xv. 1, &c.); but they shall be readmitted to Jehovah's presence and restored to His favour. The prophecy of Jer. xxx. 20 will be fulfilled.

PSALM CIII.

The hope of the preceding Psalm (*v.* 13) has been realised. Sorrow has been turned into joy. God has forgiven the sins of His people and taken them back into His favour. Praise and thanksgiving take the place of complaint and supplication.

The Psalm bears the name of David in the title, but it is impossible to suppose that it was written by him. The Aramaic colouring of the language[1], the allusions to Job, Jeremiah, and the later chapters of Isaiah, and the general style and matter of the Psalm, combine to make it certain that it belongs to a far later date. If Ps. cii may be assigned

[1] In *vv.* 3—5 peculiar forms of the pronominal suffix of 2nd pers. sing. fem. *ēkī*, and plur. *aykī* are used. They are found again in cxvi. 7, 19; cxxxv. 9; cxxxvii. 6; and elsewhere only in 2 Kings iv. 2 ff., Jer. xi. 15 (?); Cant. ii. 13 (?). They resemble the Aramaic form, and appear to have been in use in the dialect of North Israel, and to have been employed occasionally after the Exile under the influence of Aramaic (cp. the Aramaic form of suffix for 3rd pers. masc. in cxvi. 12) in poetry as rhythmically euphonious forms. See Gesen.-Kautzsch *Gram.* § 91, 1, R. 2; 2 R. 2.

to the close of the Exile, Ps. ciii may with equal probability be placed in the early years of the Return. It was written while the sense of the nation's forgiveness, of which that deliverance was the proof, was still fresh and vivid.

It is evident that *vv.* 10 ff. speak of Jehovah's mercies to the nation, and some commentators think that the speaker in *vv.* 1—5 also is the personified nation. But the change from the singular in *vv.* 1—5 to the plural in *vv.* 6 ff. is left unexplained by this theory. Here, as in Ps. cii, it is more natural to suppose that the Psalmist, when he uses the first person singular, is really speaking for himself, and using words which any other pious Israelite might appropriate for the expression of his own personal feelings.

But just as in Ps. cii national sorrows and sufferings have so deeply entered into the Psalmist's heart that he speaks of them as his own, so here he so completely identifies himself with the destinies of the nation that its joys are his own, and he gives thanks for national deliverance and national mercies as though they had been vouchsafed to him individually.

The Psalm falls into five approximately equal stanzas, the first and last forming the introduction and conclusion, and the other three the main body of the Psalm.

i. The Psalmist summons his soul and all his faculties to praise Jehovah for pardon, redemption, and bountiful provision for every need (1—5).

ii. Jehovah's revelation of Himself to Moses has been verified afresh in His recent treatment of Israel (6—10). His pardoning mercy knows no limits; His fatherly love shews the most tender consideration (11—14). Man may be frail and transitory, but those who fear Jehovah can rest in the assurance of His eternal faithfulness to their posterity (15—18).

iii. The thought of the universality of Jehovah's kingdom naturally introduces the call to all creation to join in an universal chorus of praises (19—22).

The Psalm is one of singular beauty. Its tenderness, its trustfulness, its hopefulness, anticipate the spirit of the N.T. It does not contain one jarring note, and it furnishes fit language of thanksgiving for the greater blessings of a more marvellous redemption than that of Israel from Babylon.

A Psalm of David.

103 Bless the LORD, O my soul:
And all that is within me, *bless* his holy name.

1—5. The Psalmist exhorts himself to praise God for His manifold mercies.

1. *My soul* is the Psalmist's self or personality: *all that is within me* are the various organs of the body, which were regarded by the Hebrews as the seat of thought will and emotion. The Psalmist summons all the faculties and powers of his being to unite in the praise of Jehovah.

his holy name] Cp. xxxiii. 21; cv. 3; cvi. 47; cxlv. 21. Jehovah's

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
And forget not all his benefits:
Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; 2
Who healeth all thy diseases; 3
Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; 4
Who crowneth thee *with* lovingkindness and tender mercies;
Who satisfieth thy mouth with good *things;* 5
So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

holiness, which must needs be vindicated in the punishment of Israel's sin, was again demonstrated in the deliverance which proved His faithfulness to His covenant. Cp. Ezek. xxxix. 7, 25.

2. *forget not*] "Beware lest thou forget" is the often repeated warning of Deuteronomy (vi. 12; viii. 11; &c.). "Si oblivisceris tacebis" is St Augustine's comment.

3. The Psalmist may have had in mind Ex. xv. 26, "I am Jehovah that healeth thee"; and Deut. xxix. 22, where the somewhat rare word for 'diseases' is used of the judgements with which the land is to be punished for Israel's sins. The word need not be limited to bodily sickness, but may include all suffering. The removal of the punishment of sin is the proof of its forgiveness. Cp. lxxxv. 1—3; cxlvii. 3.

4. *from destruction*] So the LXX, ἐκ φθορᾶς. But *shachath* more probably means *the pit*, i.e. *the grave*. See note on xvi. 10. The restoration from Babylon was a renewal of the nation's life, in which each member of it had a personal share.

crowneth] Cp. viii. 5; and for a similar metaphor, Prov. iii. 3.

5. *thy mouth*] So the A.V. for the same word in xxxii. 9, and the R.V. has retained the rendering here, though it rests on no sure basis. The Ancient Versions are at fault. The LXX gives *thy desire*; the Targ. *the days of thine old age*; the Syr. *thy body*; Aq. and Jer. *thy adornment*. The latter is the regular meaning of the word; and it has been suggested that, like *glory* in xvi. 9, it may mean *soul*. But this is improbable, as the soul itself is addressed; and it seems better to suppose that the verb has an unusual construction (but cp. cxlv. 16), and to render:

Who adorneth thee to the full with goodliness;
(So that) thy youth is renewed like an eagle.

In Israel's resurrection from the grave of exile each Israelite is as it were endowed with a fresh accession of youthful vigour. Cp. Is. xl. 31, where, as here, the point of comparison is the strength of the eagle, which might well seem to enjoy perpetual youth. There is no need to suppose an allusion to the fable that the eagle periodically renewed its strength by soaring sunwards and then plunging into the sea. Coverdale's paraphrase in the P.B.V., "making thee young and lusty as an eagle," gives the sense rightly.

6 The LORD executeth righteousness
And judgment for all that are oppressed.
7 He made known his ways unto Moses,
His acts unto the children of Israel.
8 The LORD *is* merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.
9 He will not always chide:
Neither will he keep *his anger* for ever.
10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins;
Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.
11 For as the heaven is high above the earth,
So great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

6—10. Jehovah's gracious dealings with men illustrated from the experience of Israel.

6. Jehovah executeth righteous acts,
And judgements for all that are oppressed.

Cp. cxlvi. 7; Judg. v. 11. This general truth has been verified afresh in the deliverance from Babylon.

7, 8. *v.* 7*a* is a reminiscence of Moses' prayer, "make known to me, I pray, thy ways" (Ex. xxxiii. 13), and *v.* 8 is quoted from the revelation of Jehovah's character which was the answer to that prayer (Ex. xxxiv. 6). It is often referred to, e.g. lxxxvi. 15; cxlv. 8; Joel ii. 13; Neh. ix. 17; &c. God's 'ways' and 'doings' here mean His methods of dealing with men, and this quotation gives a summary of them.

Render *v.* 8,

Jehovah is full of compassion and gracious,
Slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness.

9. Cp. Is. lvii. 16; Jer. iii. 12.

chide] Or, contend. He is slow to anger, yet the time comes when He must as it were bring a suit against His people, and convict them of their sin (Is. iii. 13; Mic. vi. 2; Jer. ii. 9), and shew His indignation by punishing them for it; but even then His anger does not last for ever.

10. God has punished Israel less than their iniquities deserved. Cp. Ezr. ix. 13.

11—14. The greatness and tenderness of Jehovah's forgiving love.

11. Cp. xxxvi. 5; lvii. 10; Is. lv. 9.

so *great is*] **so** mighty hath been. The change of a letter would give the sense, *so high hath been*; but it is unnecessary. Cp. cxvii. 2. The perfect tense in *vv.* 10—12 refers to Israel's recent experience.

them that fear him] True Israelites are those who can claim the promise. Note the triple repetition of the words, which recur in *vv.* 13, 17.

As far as the east is from the west,
So far hath he removed our transgressions from us.
Like as a father pitieth *his* children,
So the LORD pitieth them that fear him.
For he knoweth our frame;
He remembereth that we *are* dust.
As for man, his days *are* as grass:
As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.
For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone;
And the place thereof shall know it no more.
But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him,
And his righteousness unto children's children;
To such as keep his covenant,
And to those that remember his commandments to do them.

12. For similar language to denote the completeness of the removal of sin by pardoning grace cp. Is. xxxviii. 17; Mic. vii. 19.

13. Cp. xxvii. 10; Is. xlix. 15; Luke xv. 20.

pitieth] **Hath compassion on.** The A.V. misses the connexion with "full of compassion" in *v.* 8.

14. Here as often the frailty of man is pleaded as a motive for mercy. Cp. lxxviii. 39; lxxxix. 47.

our frame] Lit. *our formation*; what we are made of. The verse is an allusion to Gen. ii. 7, "The LORD God *formed* man of the *dust* of the ground."

15—18. Man passes away, but God's mercy endures for ever.

15. As for *man*] **Mortal man**: the Heb. *'enōsh* denotes man in his weakness and frailty (xc. 3). For the figure of the grass cp. xc. 5, 6; Is. li. 12; for that of the flower, Job xiv. 2; for both, Is. xl. 6 ff.

16. The verse may refer to the withering of the flower (A.V.), but it is more poetical to understand it metaphorically of the disappearance of the man.

For a wind passeth over him, and he is not,
And his place shall know him no more.

"The east wind, blowing over the desert in summer, is dry and parching, and withers up all vegetation." Tristram, *Nat. Hist.* p. 34. Cp. Hos. xiii. 15. The second line is from Job vii. 10; cp. viii. 18, xx. 9.

17. Men may pass away, but Jehovah's lovingkindness and righteousness, i.e. His covenant faithfulness, endure. The eternity of God is the rock upon which faith can repose in view of the mutability of man. Cp. xc. 1; cii. 12, 27; Is. xl. 8. Those who fear Him can securely commit their posterity to His care. Cp. cii. 28. Both the assurance, and the condition introduced by *v.* 18, rest upon Ex. xx. 6; Deut. vii. 9.

18. *his commandments*] R.V. **his precepts.**

19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens;
And his kingdom ruleth over all.
20 Bless the LORD, ye his angels,
That excel in strength, that do his commandments,
Hearkening unto the voice of his word.
21 Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts;
Ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.
22 Bless the LORD, all his works
In all places of his dominion:
Bless the LORD, O my soul.

19—22. The thought of Jehovah's supreme and universal sovereignty introduces a concluding call to the whole universe to unite in His praises.

19. Jehovah hath established his throne in heaven, the sphere of all that is sublime, unchanging, eternal (xi. 4; xciii. 2).

his kingdom &c.] Cp. 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12. Cp. the watchword of other Psalms of the Return, "Jehovah hath proclaimed himself King" (xciii. 1; xcvi. 10; xcvii. 1; xcix. 1).

20. Bless Jehovah, ye angels of his;
Ye mighty in strength, that do his word,
Hearkening unto the voice of his word.

Heavenly beings are most capable of praising the heavenly King. For the address to the angels cp. xxix. 1; cxlviii. 2. They are called *mighty in strength* as God's warriors; cp. Joel iii. 11. The "blessed obedience" of the angels is an example for man.

21. By Jehovah's *hosts* and *ministers* may be meant the innumerable multitudes of celestial beings of lower rank, subordinated to the celestial hierarchy spoken of in *v.* 20 (Dan. vii. 10; Heb. i. 14); or perhaps "the host of heaven," the stars, which are closely connected with angels in the O.T. (Job xxxviii. 7), and all the powers of Nature, which subserve Jehovah's purposes (civ. 4; cxlviii. 2, 3).

22. Bless Jehovah, all ye his works,
In all places of his dominion:
Bless Jehovah, O my soul.

The 'Song of the Three Children' is a noble expansion of this theme. In the last line the Psalmist returns to the point from which he started. In creation's universal hymn of praise he would fain bear his part, however humble.

PSALM CIV.

This glorious Psalm is conspicuous alike for its poetic beauty and for its religious significance. It is a companion piece to Ps. ciii, and was probably written by the same poet. Both of them begin and end with

the same call to adoring praise, *Bless Jehovah, O my soul.* In Ps. ciii that call is based upon the consideration of God's mercy exhibited in His recent deliverance of Israel, in Ps. civ upon the contemplation of His power, wisdom, and goodness manifested in the creation and maintenance of the world. History and Nature render their concurrent testimony.

The author of this Psalm has been called "the Wordsworth of the ancients, penetrated with a love for nature, and gifted with the insight that springs from love" (Aglen). Undoubtedly he was an enthusiastic lover of Nature, but it was not for its own sake merely that he loved it. It was to him "a book which heavenly truth imparts."

> "The earth
> And common face of nature spake to him
> Rememberable things."

For him the invisible attributes of God, His everlasting power and divinity, were daily rendered visible to human reason in the works of creation (Rom. i. 20).

The general arrangement of the poem is suggested by the story of creation in Gen. i, but the treatment of the subject is free and original. Often we are reminded of the creation-pictures in Job xxxviii—xli, with which the author must have been familiar. Sometimes he draws a picture of the process of creation, but for the most part it is the present order and continuous maintenance of the universe by the beneficent will of the Creator which kindles his devout enthusiasm. God did not make the world and leave it to itself. It depends absolutely upon His will for the continuance of its existence. It is He who "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts xvii. 25). And at the end the poet looks forward to the banishment of evil, and the restoration of the harmony of creation, "that God may be all in all."

The following analysis may help to indicate the plan of the Psalm.

Creation is a revelation of the incomparable majesty of God. The elemental forces of Nature are an expression of His Almighty power (1—4). He formed the earth and separated the land and sea (5—9); and while the great mass of waters is thus confined in its appointed place, provision is made for the needs of beast and bird by spring and stream (10—12). He sends rain to fertilise the earth, and make it produce food for man and beast (13—15); He plants it with stately trees, which are the home of the birds, and peoples the mountains and rocks with His creatures (16—18). Moon and sun mark times and seasons, day and night (19—23). Then, after an exclamation of adoring wonder, the poet points to the sea with its manifold marvels (24—26), and emphasises the perpetual dependence of every living thing on God not only for sustenance but for life (27—30). Finally with a glance at the awful power of Him Who can destroy as easily as He can create, the Psalmist prays that His works may never cease to please Him and reveal His glory. As long as he lives he will sing praise to God. May all that disturbs the harmony of creation be banished from the earth (31—35).

The choice of this Psalm as a Proper Psalm for Whitsunday was probably due to the reference it contains to the spirit of God as the

source of life; it has moreover a singular fitness for the great festival which in this country falls at the time when spring has once more "renewed the face of the ground."

104 Bless the LORD, O my soul.
O LORD my God, thou art very great;
Thou art clothed with honour and majesty.
2 Who coverest *thyself with* light as *with* a garment:
Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:
3 Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters:
Who maketh the clouds his chariot:
Who walketh upon the wings of the wind:

1—4. The greatness and majesty of Jehovah exhibited in creation.

1. The verbs (not adjectives or participles as in xcvi. 4) of the Heb. express an act rather than a state: *thou hast made thyself very great... thou hast clothed thyself* &c. It is not, so to speak, God's eternal and immutable greatness which the poet celebrates, but the revelation of His greatness, the assumption, as it were, of a new robe of imperial majesty in the creation of the world. *Honour* and *majesty* are the attributes of a king. Cp. xcvi. 6; xxi. 5; viii. 1. For the phrase of line 3 cp. Job xl. 10; Ps. xciii. 1.

2. Light, the first created element, is as it were God's robe, revealing while it conceals Him. Nothing can serve better as the expression of His Nature (1 John i. 5; 1 Tim. vi. 16). Light is universally diffused; it is the condition of life, the source of gladness, the emblem of purity.

who stretchest out &c.] Cp. Is. xl. 22. The canopy of the sky is compared to a tent-curtain, stretched out over the earth. By His simple fiat God spread out these heavens as easily as a man might pitch his tent. Their vastness is a symbol of the majesty of the King Who dwells in His royal pavilion, Whom yet "heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain."

Observe the present participles, *covering thyself, stretching out.* The original act of creation is regarded as continued into the present in the maintenance of the universe.

3. By a bold paradox the Creator is described as *laying the beams of* **his upper chambers** *in the waters.* On the mysterious reservoir of waters, which was imagined by the ancient Hebrews to exist above the 'firmament' (Gen. i. 7; Ps. xxix. 3; cxlviii. 4), He constructs His secret dwelling, as a man builds "upper chambers" on the roof of his house for air and privacy. The line is an echo of Amos ix. 6, "he that buildeth his upper chambers in the heavens."

who maketh the clouds &c.] The stormcloud and the tempest are the symbols of His Advent. Cp. xviii. 10; Is. xix. 1; Dan. vii. 13; Matt. xxiv. 30.

Who maketh his angels spirits;
His ministers a flaming fire: 4

4. The A.V. follows the LXX, which is quoted in Heb. i. 7, with the change of *a flaming fire* into *a flame of fire*. The Greek like the Hebrew is ambiguous, for the word for *angels* may mean simply *messengers*, and that for *spirits* may mean simply *winds*. But it is clear that the spiritual nature of angels is not in question here, and that the right rendering is *winds*. The construction of the whole verse has however been the subject of much discussion.

(1) If the construction of the A.V. and LXX is retained, and it is the most natural construction of the Heb. words, we may render,

Who maketh his angels winds,
His ministers a flaming fire,

and the meaning will be that as Jehovah reveals Himself in the works of creation, so He arrays the spiritual agents and ministers who surround Him (ciii. 20, 21) with the form of physical phenomena, the wind and the lightning. "Where men at first see only material objects and forms of nature there God is present, fulfilling His will through His servants under the forms of elemental action" (Bp Westcott on Heb. i. 7). The Targ., adopting the same construction, paraphrases, "Who makes his messengers swift as winds, his ministers strong as fire," but this explanation misses the connexion with the preceding verses.

(2) Most commentators however think that the context demands the rendering,

Who maketh winds his messengers,
Flaming fire his ministers.

As the clouds are Jehovah's chariot, so winds and lightnings are His messengers and servants. The great forces of Nature are His agents, employed by Him to do His bidding. Cp. cxlviii. 8. But this rendering is not free from objection on grammatical grounds. The order of the words is decidedly against it.

(3) A third possible rendering is,

Who maketh his messengers of winds,
His ministers of flaming fire.

Jehovah forms His messengers and ministers out of winds and lightnings; He uses these natural agents for the execution of His purposes. This rendering expresses the same sense as (2), though somewhat less directly, and is free from its grammatical difficulty.

The first rendering however deserves more consideration than it has generally received. It is the most natural rendering, and its connexion with the context, if less obvious than that of (2) and (3), is still real. The general purport of these verses is not to shew "how the various natural agents are appropriated to different uses by the Creator," but how the Creator is revealed in and through the works of Creation. And as Jehovah is represented in *vv.* 20, 21 of Ps. ciii, which is so closely related to this Ps., as environed by hosts of angels and ministers, it is suitable to shew here how these angels and ministers find expression in physical phenomena.

On the grammatical question see Driver's *Hebrew Tenses*, § 195, *Obs.*

5 *Who* laid the foundations of the earth,
That it should not be removed for ever.
6 Thou coveredst it *with* the deep as *with* a garment:
The waters stood above the mountains.
7 At thy rebuke they fled;
At the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.
8 They go up *by* the mountains; they go down *by* the valleys
Unto the place which thou hast founded for them.
9 Thou hast set a bound *that* they may not pass over;
That they turn not again to cover the earth.

5—9. The formation of the earth, and the separation of land and water: the work of the third day, Gen. i. 9, 10; cp. Job xxxviii. 8—11.

5. He founded the earth on its bases,
That it should not be moved for ever.

The earth is compared to a building erected upon solid foundations. Cp. Job xxxviii. 6; Prov. viii. 29.

6. This verse does not refer to the Flood, though its language may be borrowed from the account of the Flood (Gen. vii. 19, 20; and cp. *v.* 9 with Gen. ix. 11, 15), but to the primitive condition of the earth. It is regarded as already moulded into hill and valley, but enveloped with the 'abyss' of waters (Gen. i. 2), by which even the highest mountains are covered. Cp. Milton, *Par. Lost*, vii. 278,

"Over all the face of earth
Main ocean flowed."

The tense of the original is a graphic 'imperfect.' "The waters **were standing** above the mountains."

7, 8. The graphic imperfects are continued, picturing the process of the separation of land and water.

7. At thy rebuke they flee,
At the voice of thy thunder they haste away,
8. (The mountains rise, the vales sink down,)
Unto the place which thou hadst founded for them.

The 'rebuke' of God is His command, uttered as it were with a voice of thunder (xviii. 15; Is. l. 2). It is best to follow the marg. of A.V. and R.V. in taking *v.* 8*a* as a parenthesis, describing the result of this Divine command. Mountains and valleys appear (Gen. i. 9) as the waters retire to the place appointed for them. Cp. Ov. *Metam.* i. 344 f.

"Flumina subsidunt, colles exire videntur,
Surgit humus, crescunt loca, decrescentibus undis."

See also Milton, *Par. Lost*, vii. 285 ff.

The rendering of the A.V. and R.V., which is also grammatically possible, appears to describe the commotion of the waters as the great deep breaks up and they seek their appointed place.

9. The reference is not to the Flood, but to the original separation of land and water confirmed after the Flood (Gen. ix. 9 ff.). Cp. Job xxxviii. 10, 11; Prov. viii. 29.

He sendeth the springs into the valleys,
Which run among the hills. 10
They give drink to every beast of the field:
The wild asses quench their thirst. 11
By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, 12
Which sing among the branches.
He watereth the hills from his chambers: 13
The earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.
He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, 14
And herb for the service of man:

10—18. While He confines the great mass of waters to its appointed place, He fertilises the land by springs and rain, and makes bountiful provision for the wants of men and animals.

10. Who sendeth forth springs into the valleys;
They run among the mountains.

Cp. the description of Palestine in Deut. viii. 7.

11. *every beast of the field*] Wild animals, as distinguished from domesticated animals, the 'cattle' of *v.* 14.

the wild asses] Mentioned particularly as one of the most striking and beautiful of wild animals. See Davidson's note on Job xxxix. 7, a passage which may have been in the Psalmist's mind, for he was evidently familiar with Job. Jeremiah (xiv. 6) draws a graphic picture of the sufferings of the wild ass in a drought.

quench] Lit. *break.* Cp. frangere sitim.

12. Beside them dwell the birds of the heaven;
From among the leafage they utter their song.

Beside the springs and streams grow the trees which are the home of the birds, whose song of praise to their Maker ever rises from their branches.

13. Who giveth the mountains drink from his upper chambers. Palestine was "a land of mountains and valleys, drinking water of the rain of heaven" (Deut. xi. 11). It is not inaccessible mountain tops which the poet is thinking of, so much as the upland corn fields (lxxii. 16), watered by the rain which God sends down from His "upper chambers" (*v.* 3), as the valleys are watered by streams.

the fruit of thy works] Generally explained to mean the rain, as a product of the clouds which God has made. But this is harsh: it is much more natural to take the phrase in the simple sense of "fruit produced by God's manifold operations." Earth is fertilised by the rain and springs, and rejoices in its abundant produce. The thought is further developed in *vv.* 14—18.

14. *herb*] Cp. Gen. i. 11, 12, 29, 30; iii. 18; ix. 3. The term includes all vegetable products.

for the service of man] The use of the word in *v.* 23 and elsewhere is in favour of the rendering of R.V. marg., *for the labour of man*:—

That *he* may bring forth food out of the earth;
15 And wine *that* maketh glad the heart of man,
And oil to make *his* face to shine,
And bread *which* strengtheneth man's heart.
16 The trees of the LORD are full *of sap;*
The cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted;
17 Where the birds make their nests:
As for the stork, the fir trees *are* her house.
18 The high hills *are* a refuge for the wild goats;
And the rocks for the conies.
19 He appointed the moon for seasons:

God makes the soil respond to man's tillage with abundant produce. But the Heb. word seems to be capable of the same extension of meaning as 'service' and this sense fits the parallelism and the context best.

14 *b*, **15**. The division of the verses obscures the parallelism. Render,

That he may bring forth bread out of the earth,
And that wine may gladden the heart of man:
That he may make his face to shine with oil,
And that bread may sustain man's heart.

Corn wine and oil were the chief products of Palestine (Deut. xii. 17). God provides for man's enjoyment as well as for his sustenance. Cp. for the language Judg. ix. 13; Eccl. x. 19.

16. The trees of Jehovah are not merely stately and majestic trees, but as the next line shews, *those which He has planted*, the natural growth of the primeval forest, in contrast to trees planted by the hand of man. Cp. Num. xxiv. 6. They are satisfied (cp. 13 *b*) with the rain from heaven.

17. *the stork*] *Chăsīdāh*, the Heb. name for the stork, is connected with *chĕsĕd*, "lovingkindness, and it was so called from its affection for its young, a trait often noticed by Greek and Latin writers. Thus it is called πτηνῶν εὐσεβέστατον ζῴων by Babrius (Fab. 13), and 'avis pia' or 'pietaticultrix' (Petron. 55. 6). Though in Western Europe the stork commonly builds its nest on houses, and in the East selects ruins where they are to be found, "where neither houses nor ruins occur, it selects any trees tall and strong enough to provide a platform for its huge nest, and for this purpose none are more convenient than the fir tree." Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 248.

18. From the lofty trees which are the home of birds it is a natural transition to the lofty mountains which are the home of animals. The Syrian wild goat, lit. 'the climber,' is a species of ibex (1 Sam. xxiv. 2; Job xxxix. 1): see Tristram, p. 95. The 'coney,' Heb. *shāphān* = 'the hider,' is not the rabbit, but the *hyrax Syriacus*, a peculiar animal, not unlike a marmot in appearance, which "lives in holes in the rocks, where it makes its nest and conceals its young, and to which it retires at the least alarm." See Tristram, p. 75.

19—23. Moon and sun mark the seasons and the alternations of day and night. The work of the fourth day, Gen. i. 14.

The sun knoweth his going down.
Thou makest darkness, and it is night:
Wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep *forth.* 20
The young lions roar after *their* prey,
And seek their meat from God. 21
The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together,
And lay them down in their dens. 22
Man goeth forth unto his work
And to his labour until the evening. 23
O LORD, how manifold are thy works!
In wisdom hast thou made them all: 24
The earth is full *of* thy riches.
So is this great and wide sea,
Wherein *are* things creeping innumerable, 25
Both small and great beasts.

19. The changes of the moon mark periods of time and the proper times for festivals. Cp. Ecclus. xliii. 7, "From the moon is the sign for the festival." The sun knows and fulfils its daily duty. The sunset is mentioned, to introduce the picture of night in *vv.* 20 ff.; and night precedes day, as commonly in oriental reckoning.

21. The dreaded beasts of prey are part of God's creation, depending on His bounty. Cp. cxlvii. 9.

22. *they gather themselves together*] Better as R.V., **they get them away.**

24—30. An exclamation of wonder and admiration at the variety and wisdom of God's works introduces a description of the marvels of the sea, and the mystery of life. *Vv.* 25, 26 are based on Gen. i. 20, 21: *vv.* 27, 28 on Gen. i. 29, 30.

24. *in wisdom*] Cp. Prov. iii. 19; viii. 22 ff.

thy riches] The word may mean *thy possessions* (Vulg. Jer. *possessione tua*, representing a Sept. reading τῆς κτήσεώς σου): or, *thy creation* or *creatures* (LXX τῆς κτισεώς σου, Syr., Targ.): but usage is in favour of the first sense. Cp. cv. 21.

25. So is *this great and wide sea*] R.V. rightly, **Yonder is the sea, great and wide.** It would almost seem as if the sea lay stretched before the Psalmist's gaze as he composed his poem. Dean Stanley has pointed out that all the natural features of the Psalm are in sight from the cedar grove of Lebanon (*Sermons in the East*, p. 217).

things creeping] Or, **things moving**; cp. Gen. i. 21; Ps. lxix. 34. The word (used in *v.* 20 of the stealthy movement of animals in quest of their prey) is not limited to reptiles properly so called. It may refer either to land animals or water animals, or may include both.

both small and great beasts] **Living creatures, both small and great.**

26 There go the ships:
There is that leviathan, *whom* thou hast made to play therein.
27 These wait all upon thee;
That *thou* mayest give *them* their meat in due season.
28 *That* thou givest them they gather:
Thou openest thine hand, they are filled *with* good.
29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled:
Thou takest away their breath, they die,
And return to their dust.
30 Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created:
And thou renewest the face of the earth.

26. The stately ships, which excited the wonder and admiration of the landsman (Prov. xxx. 19; Is. ii. 16), seem part of the life of the sea, and the mention of them suggests its use as a means of transit.

there is *that leviathan*] **There is leviathan, whom thou hast formed**, either (1) **to play therein**, or (2) **to play with him.** Both renderings are grammatically possible. For (1) Job xl. 20 offers a parallel, and for (2) Job xli. 5 (Heb. xl. 29). But (1) suits the context best. The thought required is not that the wildest and strongest of God's creatures are but as it were His tame pets, but that the sea is the playground of the mighty monsters which display His power and goodness as they disport themselves there in the enjoyment of their life. In Job xli *leviathan* means the crocodile, but here the name is evidently used of sea-monsters generally, particularly the great cetaceans, of which there are many, and formerly were probably many more, in the Mediterranean.

27. *These wait all* &c.] **All of them wait upon thee.** Not marine animals only, but all living creatures are meant, as in Gen. i. 29, 30. God is the great householder, dispensing to all His family their portions. Cp. cxlv. 15, 16; cxlvii. 9.

28. **Thou givest unto them, they gather:**
Thou openest thine hand, they are satisfied with good.

29. All creatures depend upon God for life as well as food. The breath or spirit of God is the source of the life-breath of His creatures. The Psalmist probably had Job xxxiv. 14, 15 in his mind. Cp. Acts xvii. 25; Col. i. 17. The 'hiding' of God's face is usually the symbol of His wrath; but here it denotes rather the withdrawal of His sustaining power. Cp. xxx. 7.

thou takest away their breath] **Or, thou gatherest in,** withdrawing the spirit lent for a time (Eccl. xii. 7), so that **they expire**, and their bodies return to the dust whence they were taken (Gen. iii. 19).

30. But life not death rules in Nature. A new generation takes the place of the old. Creation continues, for God is perpetually sending forth His spirit, and renewing the face of the earth with fresh life.

The glory of the LORD shall endure for ever:
The LORD shall rejoice in his works.
He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth:
He toucheth the hills, and they smoke.
I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live:
I will sing *praise* to my God while I have my being.
My meditation of him shall be sweet:
I will be glad in the LORD.
Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth,
And let the wicked be no more.
Bless thou the LORD, O my soul.
Praise ye the LORD.

31—35. Concluding prayers and vows.

31. May the glory of Jehovah endure for ever!
May Jehovah rejoice in his works!
32. Who looketh on the earth, and it trembleth,
Toucheth the mountains, and they smoke.

May this manifestation of God in Nature ever continue! May Jehovah never cease to rejoice in His works as He rejoiced when He pronounced all things to be very good (Gen. i. 31; Prov. viii. 31). A look, a touch are enough to remind the earth of the awful power of its Creator, Who if He willed could annihilate as easily as He created. The Psalmist has in mind Am. ix. 5 (cp. above *v.* 3), Ex. xix. 18; *v.* 32*b* is imitated in cxliv. 5, *v.* 33 in cxlvi. 2.

34. Let my meditation be sweet unto him:
As for me, I will rejoice in Jehovah.

Sweet, i.e. acceptable, a word used of sacrifices in Jer. vi. 20; Hos. ix. 4; Mal. iii. 4. Cp. Ps. xix. 14. As Jehovah rejoices in His works (*v.* 31), so the Psalmist rejoices in Jehovah.

35. *Let the sinners be consumed* &c.] There is no need to make excuse for this conclusion of the Psalm. It is not an imprecation, but a solemn prayer for the restoration of the harmony of creation by the banishment from it of "all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity." The preceding verses (31, 32) have just hinted that there is something in the world which may hinder God from continuing to rejoice in His works. What is it?

> "Disproportioned sin
> Jarred against nature's chime, and with harsh din
> Broke the fair music that all creatures made
> To their great Lord, whose love their motion swayed
> In perfect diapason, whilst they stood
> In first obedience, and their state of good."

Modern thought would say, 'May sin be banished': but Hebrew thought is not abstract but concrete, and moreover the form of the prayer reminds us of the solemn truth that sin is a personal thing, which cannot be separated from the sinner, but has its existence through his

perverted will. It may be noted that the intensive form of the word for sinner implies obstinate and incorrigible habit.

As in Ps. ciii, the Psalmist concludes as he began, *Bless Jehovah, O my soul*, to which is appended the general call to praise, *Hallelujah*, 'Praise ye Jah.' This word (for according to the Massoretic tradition it is to be written as one word except in cxxxv. 3) occurs nowhere but in the Psalter[1] and meets us here for the first time.

According to Graetz (*Comm.* p. 91), and Ginsburg (*Introd. to the Heb. Bible*, pp. 376 ff.), it was the summons addressed by the precentor to the congregation to join him in reciting the Psalm, or to respond by repeating the first verse after his recitation of each verse. Its proper place therefore is at the beginning not at the end of a Psalm, and in the LXX (with the possible exception of Ps. cl) it is always found at the beginning. In the Massoretic text however it occurs at both beginning and end of eight Psalms, at the beginning only of two, at the end only of five, and once in the text of the Psalm (cxxxv. 3).

PSALM CV.

The two historical Psalms which stand at the end of Book iv are closely related. Ps. cv is a Psalm of thanksgiving, recapitulating the marvellous works by which Jehovah demonstrated His faithfulness to the covenant which He made with Abraham. Ps. cvi is a Psalm of penitence, reciting the history of Israel's faithlessness and disobedience. They present, so to speak, the obverse and reverse of Israel's history; the common prophetic theme of Jehovah's lovingkindness and Israel's ingratitude. They have much in common with Ps. lxxviii, with which their author was evidently familiar; but that Psalm is distinguished by its didactic and monitory character, and it combines the two strands of thought which are here separated.

Such a recital of the proofs of Jehovah's faithfulness as is contained in Ps. cv was very suitable as an encouragement to the community of the Restoration. If God had preserved the patriarchs, and made a nomad family into a strong nation, giving them possession of the land through which they wandered as strangers, He could again fulfil His purposes even through the feeble body of returned exiles (Is. lx. 22). That these Psalms belong to the period after the Return from Babylon is evident, for they presuppose not only the Exile (cvi. 47) but the restoration of the Temple-worship. Ps. cvi. 47, which at first sight might seem to imply that no return had yet taken place, must be understood as a prayer for the completion of the restoration by the return of the Israelites from all the countries in which they were scattered. The repeated call to "give thanks to Jehovah," to "praise Jah" corresponds exactly to the terms in which the function of the Levites is described in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles (Ezr. iii. 11; Neh. xii. 24; 1 Chron. xvi. 4;

[1] In Jer. xx. 13 the phrase is 'Praise ye Jehovah,' as in Ps. cxvii. 1 Cp. however Tobit xiii. 18, "All her streets shall say, Hallelujah": 3 Macc. vii. 13, "The priests and all the people shouted, Hallelujah."

&c.). On the other hand these Psalms are earlier than Chronicles (c. 300 B.C.). The festal anthem which the Chronicler introduces on the occasion of the translation of the Ark to Zion is a combination of Ps. cv. 1—15 (=1 Chron. xvi. 8—22) with Ps. xcvi (=1 Chron. xvi. 23—33) and cvi. 1, 47, 48 (=1 Chron. xvi. 34—36). It is certain that the Psalms stand in their original form in the Psalter, and that the anthem in Chronicles is merely a compilation; for cv. 1—14 is clearly but a portion of a connected poem, while there is an entire absence of connexion in Chron. between *vv.* 22 and 23, and between *vv.* 33 and 34. A theory has been advanced that the anthem is a later insertion in Chronicles, and consequently that the date of Chronicles does not fix a limit for the date of the Psalms; but this theory is improbable.

Though there is no marked strophical arrangement in Ps. cv, there is a certain symmetry in its plan. It consists of four nearly equal divisions.

i. The Israelites, as the seed of Abraham, the children of Jacob, are summoned to praise Jehovah for His faithfulness to His covenant with the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (1—12).

ii. He guarded them in their wanderings, and led Jacob into Egypt, after He had prepared the way by sending Joseph before him (13—24).

iii. When the Egyptians oppressed the Israelites, He displayed His power in the judgements which led to their release (25—36).

iv. He brought them out of Egypt, protected them and provided for their wants in the wilderness, and settled them in the land of Canaan, that they might serve Him by grateful obedience to His laws (37—45).

O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: 105

1—6. The Israelites are summoned to proclaim to all the nations Jehovah's mighty doings for His people, and to stir up their own hearts to praise and thanksgiving by the recollection of His marvellous works.

1. The LXX is probably right in placing *Hallelujah* at the beginning of this Psalm instead of at the end of Ps. civ. The two companion Psalms ciii and civ will then begin and end with *Bless ye Jehovah*; and the two companion Psalms cv and cvi will begin and end with *Hallelujah*.

The first verse is taken verbatim from Is. xii. 4.

O give thanks unto the LORD] The LXX renders ἐξομολογεῖσθε, hence Vulg. and Jer. *confitemini*, 'make confession,' which may possibly be the primary meaning, from which the word derives its general sense *to praise* or *give thanks*. Pss. cvi, cvii, cxviii, cxxxvi begin with the same invitation.

It is natural to connect these Psalms in which "Give thanks unto Jehovah" and "Praise ye Jah" (Hallelujah) recur so frequently with the function of the Levites "to praise and to give thanks" (1 Chron. xvi. 4; Ezr. iii. 11; Neh. xii. 24; &c.), and to regard them as composed expressly for the service of the Second Temple.

call upon his name] Rather, **proclaim his name**, as in Ex. xxxiii. 19; xxxiv. 5, 6; cp. Deut. xxxii. 3.

Make known his deeds among the people.
2 Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him:
Talk ye of all his wondrous works.
3 Glory ye in his holy name:
Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.
4 Seek the LORD, and his strength:
Seek his face evermore.
5 Remember his marvellous works that he hath done;
His wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;
6 O ye seed of Abraham his servant,

make known **his doings among the peoples**] It was Israel's mission to proclaim to the world Jehovah's revelation of His character made known to them in the facts of their history. Cp. ix. 11.

2. *sing [psalms]*] Or, **make melody**. Cp. xcii. 1, note.

talk ye] R.V. marg., *meditate*: cp. civ. 34. The primary meaning of the word is probably *to occupy oneself diligently with*: hence either *to meditate upon*, or as context and parallelism require here and in cxl. 5, *to speak, discourse of*, a meaning which the word regularly has in post-Biblical Heb.

his wondrous works] R.V., as A.V. in *v.* 5, **his marvellous works**. Cp. xcvi. 3, and see note on ix. 1.

3. *Glory ye in his holy name*] Cp. Is. xli. 16; and see note on ciii. 1.

let the heart &c.] True devotion leads to deep inward joy which will find expression in thanksgiving. Cp. Neh. viii. 10; Acts ii. 46, 47.

4. Two synonymous words are rendered *seek* in this verse. Both originally referred to the outward act of visiting the sanctuary, but both come to express the inward purpose of the heart as well. So far as they can be distinguished the first denotes the attitude of loving devotion, the second that of inquiry or supplication. To 'seek Jehovah' is the duty and the joy of the true Israelite. From His strength and presence alone can Israel derive the protection and blessing that it needs. *His strength* cannot here mean the Ark, as in lxxviii. 61.

5. *Remember*] Compare the frequent injunctions in Deuteronomy (vii. 18; viii. 2; &c.). But Israel's history had been one long record of forgetfulness (Ps. lxxviii. 11).

his wonders] A word often coupled with 'signs' (*v.* 27; Deut. iv. 34; &c.) to denote the miracles of the Exodus.

the judgments of his mouth] Not the precepts of the law, but the sentence pronounced and executed upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians (Ex. vi. 6; vii. 4; xii. 12).

6. Grammatically, *his servant* may refer either to *Abraham* or to *seed of Abraham*. The parallelism is in favour of the latter construction, and the LXX and Jer. actually read *his servants*: but exact parallelism is not always maintained, and *v.* 42 is decidedly in favour of connecting *his servant* with *Abraham*. For *Abraham* Chron. reads *Israel*.

Ye children of Jacob, his chosen.
He *is* the LORD our God:
His judgments *are* in all the earth.
He hath remembered his covenant for ever, 8
The word *which* he commanded to a thousand generations.
Which *covenant* he made with Abraham, 9
And his oath unto Isaac;
And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, 10
And to Israel *for* an everlasting covenant:
Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, 11
The lot of your inheritance:

his chosen] R.V. **his chosen ones**, to avoid the ambiguity of the A.V. Cp. *v.* 43; cvi. 5; Deut. iv. 37; &c.

This verse is to be connected with *vv.* 1—5: the form of address reminds the Israelites at once of their privilege and their duty.

7—12. The theme of the Psalm. Jehovah has been true to the promise which He made to the patriarchs, to give them the land of Canaan.

7. He, Jehovah, is our God] He stands in a special and peculiar relation to Israel the people of His choice: but He is no mere national Deity: *His judgements are in all the earth*; He exercises an universal rule over all nations as "the Judge of all the earth" (Gen. xviii. 25).

8. *He hath remembered*] Rather, **He remembereth.** The Heb. perfect here expresses a general truth guaranteed by past experience. Chron. has *Remember ye*; but the exhortation is out of place here. Jehovah's covenant is further described as *the word* of promise *which he commanded* (cp. cxi. 9), as it were enacting it as a law (cp. *statute*, *v.* 10, and ii. 7). *To a thousand generations* (Deut. vii. 9), parallel to and synonymous with *for ever*, is to be connected with *He remembereth.*

With this and the following verses comp. the promise of Lev. xxvi. 42—45.

9, 10. For the covenant with Abraham see Gen. xvii. 2 ff.; **xv. 18**; and cp. the promises, Gen. xii. 7; xiii. 14 ff. The oath sworn to Abraham (Gen. xxii. 16) was confirmed to Isaac (Gen. xxvi. 3), and to Jacob at Bethel when he was on his way to Paddan-aram (Gen. xxviii. 13 ff.), and again in the same place on his return, after his name had been changed to Israel (xxxv. 9 ff.). The promise made to Abraham was renewed to Isaac and Jacob, because in their persons it was limited to a particular branch of Abraham's descendants.

for a law] **For a statute**, or, **decree**, as in ii. 7.

11. The promise was made to the patriarchs individually ('unto *thee*'), but in them to their descendants also; hence '*your* inheritance.'

the lot &c.] The Heb. *chĕbĕl* means (1) **a** *measuring-cord*, (2) *a*

12 When they were *but a few* men in number;
Yea, *very* few, and strangers in it.
13 When they went from one nation to another,
From *one* kingdom to another people;
14 He suffered no man to do them wrong:
Yea, he reproved kings for their sakes;
15 *Saying*, Touch not mine anointed,
And do my prophets no harm.
16 Moreover, he called *for* a famine upon the land:

measured portion (cp. our 'rod'): so, **for your appointed inheritance**. Cp. lxxviii. 55.

12. The Psalmist emphasises the marvellousness of the Divine promise by pointing out that it was made when the patriarchs were but an insignificant clan of protected aliens, and it seemed utterly improbable that they would ever become the owners of the land.

but a few *men in number*] Lit. *men of number*: a handful of men, easily counted. Jacob uses the same phrase of his family in Gen. xxxiv. 30.

yea, very *few*] The word may mean few in number, or little worth; here probably the former. Cp. Deut. vii. 7; xxvi. 5.

strangers] sojourners, foreigners under the protection of the owners of the country, without rights of citizenship. Cp. Gen. xxi. 23; xxiii. 4.

13—24. Jehovah's providential guidance of the patriarchs in their migrations.

13. *When they went* &c.] **And (when) they went** &c. The A.V. treats this verse as (virtually) the protasis to *v.* 14: the R.V. places a semicolon at the end of *v.* 12, and a full stop at the end of *v.* 13, and treats *v.* 13 as the continuation of *v.* 12. Either construction is grammatically possible, but that of the A.V. is preferable. *V.* 12 emphasises the conditions under which the promise was given, and concludes the first division of the Psalm. *Vv.* 13—15 describe the migrations of the patriarchs among the different nations of Canaan, the Egyptians, and the Philistines, as recorded in the Book of Genesis. In all their wanderings Jehovah guarded them from harm, reproving even kings such as Pharaoh (Gen. xii. 10 ff.) and Abimelech (Gen. xx, xxvi) on their account.

15. Jehovah's words. *Saying* is rightly supplied.

Touch not] The phrase is suggested by Gen. xx. 6; cp. xxvi. 11.

mine anointed **ones**...*my prophets*] The patriarchs were not actually anointed, but the term is applied to them as bearing the seal of a Divine consecration in virtue of which their persons were sacred and inviolable. Abraham is called a prophet in Gen. xx. 7 as an intercessor, and the term is applied to the patriarchs generally as the recipients of Divine revelation.

16 ff. The events which led to the migration of Jacob into Egypt.

16. And *he called*] So 2 Kings viii. 1; Am. v. 8; vii. 4; ix. 6; Hagg. i. 11. Observe the emphasis upon direct Divine agency in *vv.* 16,

He brake the whole staff of bread.
He sent a man before them,
Even Joseph, *who* was sold for a servant:
Whose feet they hurt with fetters:
He was laid *in* iron:
Until the time that his word came:
The word of the LORD tried him.

17. The famine in the land of Canaan (Gen. xli. 54) was the instrument which He summoned to effect His purpose.

he brake &c.] So Lev. xxvi. 26. Bread is the staff, i.e. support, of life (Is. iii. 1; cp. Ps. civ. 15).

17. He had sent a man before them;
Joseph was sold for a slave.

Before the famine came, God had sent Joseph into Egypt to prepare the way for their migration thither. So Joseph himself says, "God sent me before you to preserve life" (Gen. xlv. 5, 7; cp. l. 20), recognising that the hand of God had permitted the cruelty of his brothers in order to effect His purpose.

18. *Whose feet*] R.V. **His feet.** This verse is merely a poetical description of imprisonment. The narrative in Gen. does not hint that Joseph was severely treated.

he was laid in *iron*] I.e. as R.V., **he was laid in (chains of) iron.** But the Heb. literally means, (*into*) *iron entered his soul*; and *his soul* is not a mere equivalent for *he*, but denotes (though we have no word by which it could be rendered here) Joseph's whole sensitive personality. He keenly felt the degradation and suffering of his unjust imprisonment. Thus the sense is substantially the same as that of the picturesque rendering of the P.B.V. which has passed into a proverbial phrase, "the iron entered into his soul[1]." This rendering, which is that of the Targ. and Vulg.[2], is defended by Delitzsch and others, but is questionable for grammatical reasons.

19. Until the time that his word should come to pass
The promise of Jehovah tried him.

Two different Hebrew words are rendered *word* in the A.V. It seems best to understand them both of the word or promise of Jehovah communicated to Joseph in the dreams which excited the enmity of his brethren (Gen. xxxvii. 5 ff.). The promise of Jehovah is as it were personified as Jehovah's agent employed to fit Joseph for his high station (cp. cxix. 50). It tested him, purified and refined his character (Job xxiii. 10), as it led him through dark ways of humiliation, till the time came for him to be raised to the honour for which Providence destined him.

[1] Coverdale's original rendering (1535) was, *the yron pearsed his herte*. The alteration in the Great Bible (1539) was no doubt suggested by Münster's *ferreum (vinculum) intravit usque ad animam eius*.

[2] According to the present text, which has *ferrum pertransiit animam eius*. But as all the MSS. of the LXX have σίδηρον διῆλθεν ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ, it seems probable that *animam* is a corruption for *anima*.

20 The king sent and loosed him;
Even the ruler of the people, and let him go free.
21 He made him lord of his house,
And ruler of all his substance:
22 To bind his princes at his pleasure;
And teach his senators wisdom.
23 Israel also came *into* Egypt;
And Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.
24 And he increased his people greatly;
And made them stronger than their enemies.
25 He turned their heart to hate his people,
To deal subtilly with his servants.
26 He sent Moses his servant;

By some commentators 'his word' has been taken to mean *Joseph's* word, either (1) his story of his dreams (Gen. xxxvii. 5 ff., xlii. 9), or (2) his interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams (Gen. xli. 16 ff.). But 'his word' is not a natural expression for Joseph's relation of his dream, and his liberation from prison took place before his interpretation of Pharaoh's dream was verified by the event.

20. *The king sent* &c.] Gen. xli. 14.

21, 22. See Gen. xli. 39—44. Joseph, who so lately was 'bound in prison,' is invested with authority to imprison even princes, and in virtue of his wisdom is made the director of Pharaoh's counsellors.

P.B.V. *that he might inform* (i.e. instruct) *his princes* follows the LXX (Vulg.) and Jer., *ut erudiret principes eius.*

senators] Lit. *elders.*

23. *Israel also*] So Israel; the great ancestor of the nation is still meant.

the land of Ham] Cp. *v.* 27; lxxviii. 51.

24. And he made his people exceeding fruitful,
And made them mightier than their adversaries.

Jehovah is the subject of the sentence. The A.V. fails to bring out the connexion of the verse with Ex. i. 7, "The children of Israel *were fruitful*...and were *exceeding mighty*."

25—36. The enmity of the Egyptians to Israel, and the display of Jehovah's power which prepared the way for the Exodus.

25. *He turned their heart*] The rendering of the Targ., followed in P.B.V., *Whose heart turned,* is grammatically possible, but A.V. is no doubt right. The Psalmist does not shrink from attributing the hostility of the Egyptians to God's agency, because it was due to the blessings which He bestowed upon Israel; and inasmuch as it led to the Exodus, it was a link in the chain of God's action.

to deal subtilly] By their crafty plans for destroying Israel, Ex. i. 10 ff.

26. *Moses his servant*] Ex. xiv. 31, and often.

And Aaron whom he had chosen.
They shewed his signs among them, 27
And wonders in the land of Ham.
He sent darkness, and made it dark; 28
And they rebelled not against his word.
He turned their waters into blood, 29
And slew their fish.

27. *They shewed* &c.] Moses and Aaron. But the parallel passages in lxxviii. 43; Ex. x. 2 (cp. Jer. xxxii. 20) make it probable that we should follow most of the Ancient Versions (LXX, Aq. Symm. Syr. Jer.) in reading the singular, He set; and this agrees better with the context, as Jehovah is the subject in *vv.* 24, 25, 26, 28, 29.

his signs] Lit. *the acts* or *matters of his signs* (cp. *the acts* or *matters of his wondrous works* in cxlv. 5): i.e. his various signs: hardly, *the words* or *message of his signs*, "as being declarations of God's will and command to let His people go."

28. It is difficult to say why the ninth plague (Ex. x. 21 ff.) is placed first here. Possibly, like the fifth and sixth, it was not originally mentioned, and the verse was the marginal gloss of a reader who noticed the omission, which was subsequently inserted in the text in the wrong place. If however the text is sound, perhaps the ninth plague is mentioned first, because it is regarded as the plague which wrought conviction in the minds of the Egyptians, who were already anxious that the Israelites should be allowed to depart (Ex. x. 7; xi. 2, 3); though the further plague of the death of the firstborn was needed finally to convince Pharaoh. The plague of darkness was specially calculated to inspire the worshippers of the sun-god with the sense of Jehovah's power. The next line and they rebelled not against his words confirms this interpretation. 'They' must refer to the Egyptians, and the allusion must be to their change of feeling towards the Israelites after the plague of darkness, described in Ex. xi. 2, 3. Some commentators suppose that 'they' refers to Moses and Aaron, who did not disobey God's commands, as they afterwards did at Meribah (Num. xx. 24; xxvii. 14), but accepted their perilous mission. Such a statement however does not seem natural in the present context. Others read *they observed not* (שָׁמְרוּ for מָרוּ). Others follow the LXX and Syr. in omitting the negative. So in effect Coverdale (following the Zürich Bible, 'dann sy warend seinem geheyss nit gehorsam'), *for they were not obedient unto his word*; P.B.V. *and they were not* &c. But the remark would be out of place at the point when the resistance of the Egyptians had been overcome.

his word] So the *Q'rē*; R.V. his words follows the *K'thībh*, which is supported by the LXX, Aq., and Jer.

29. After mentioning the crucial plague of the darkness, the Psalmist refers briefly to the other plagues, omitting however the fifth and sixth, and inverting the order of the third and fourth.

he turned &c.] The first plague, Ex. vii. 14 ff., 21.

30 Their land brought forth frogs in abundance,
In the chambers of their kings.
31 He spake, and there came divers sorts *of flies*,
And lice in all their coasts.
32 He gave them hail *for* rain,
And flaming fire in their land.
33 He smote their vines also and their fig trees;
And brake the trees of their coasts.
34 He spake, and the locusts came,
And caterpillars, and that without number,
35 And did eat up all the herbs in their land,
And devoured the fruit of their ground.
36 He smote also all the first-born in their land,
The chief of all their strength.
37 He brought them forth also with silver and gold:
And *there was* not *one* feeble *person* among their tribes.

30. *Their land* &c.] R.V. **Their land swarmed with frogs.** The second plague, Ex. viii. 1 ff.

31. **He spake, and there came swarms of flies** (R.V.): the fourth plague, Ex. viii. 20 ff., cp. Ps. lxxviii. 45: **and lice** (or *sand-flies* or *fleas*) **in all their borders**: the third plague, Ex. viii. 16 ff., not mentioned in Ps. lxxviii.

their coasts] I.e. **their borders.**

32, 33. The seventh plague, of hail accompanied by thunder and lightning, Ex. ix. 13 ff., 25, 26; cp. Ps. lxxviii. 47, 48.

34, 35. The eighth plague, Ex. x. 1 ff.; Ps. lxxviii. 46. The Heb. word *yĕlĕq*, R.V. **cankerworm**, as A.V. in Joel i. 4, is not used in Exodus. It probably denotes the locust in its larva state.

35. And ate up all the herbage in their land,
And ate up the fruit of their ground.

The Heb. word for 'herbage' is not confined to grass, but includes vegetable growth generally with the exception of trees (civ. 14).

36. The tenth and last plague, Ex. xi. 1 ff. As in Ps. lxxviii. 51, the firstborn are described as **the beginning**, or **firstlings of all their strength.** Cp. Gen. xlix. 3; Deut. xxi. 17.

37—45. The Exodus, the miracles of the wilderness, and the settlement in Canaan.

37. So he brought them forth with silver and gold:
And there was none that stumbled among his tribes.

Israel marched out like a victorious army, with spoils which were virtually the reward of their long compulsory service (Ex. xii. 35, 36); like a host of warriors in which none are faint or weary (Is. v. 27).

his *tribes*] Jehovah's tribes (cxxii. 4) rather than Israel's (Num. xxiv. 2).

Egypt was glad when they departed: 38
For the fear of them that fell upon them.
He spread a cloud for a covering; 39
And fire to give light in the night.
The people asked, and he brought quails, 40
And satisfied them *with* the bread of heaven.
He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; 41
They ran in the dry *places like* a river.
For he remembered his holy promise, 42
And Abraham his servant.
And he brought forth his people with joy, 43
And his chosen with gladness:
And gave them the lands of the heathen: 44
And they inherited the labour of the people;
That they might observe his statutes, 45
And keep his laws.

38. Cp. Ex. xii. 33.

for the fear &c.] **For dread of them had fallen upon them.** Cp. Ex. xv. 16.

39. Ex. xiii. 21, 22; xiv. 19, 20. But here the cloud is regarded as a canopy to shelter them from the burning rays of the sun in the desert, rather than as a protection from the Egyptians. Cp. Is. iv. 5, 6.

40. The people *asked*] The Heb. verb is in the sing., but with LXX Jer. Syr. Targ. we should read the plural, **They asked.** See Ex. xvi, and cp. Ps. lxxviii. 18 ff. The murmuring of the Israelites is not mentioned, because the Psalmist's object is to point to God's goodness, not to Israel's faithlessness.

the bread of heaven] The manna: cp. lxxviii. 24, 25; Neh. ix. 15.

41. *the rock*] In Rephidim, Ex. xvii. 1 ff. A different word ('cliff') is used in Num. xx. 8 ff. The language is borrowed from Ps. lxxviii. 15, 16, 20: cp. Is. xli. 18; xlviii. 21.

42. The Psalmist returns to his theme, *v.* 8. Faithfulness to His promise was God's motive for redeeming Israel.

his holy promise] Lit., **his holy word** (*v.* 8): the sacred promise which cannot be broken.

and *Abraham his servant*] Or, **with A. his servant** (*v.* 9). Cp. Ex. ii. 24. But the A.V. may be right.

43. *with gladness*] **With jubilant singing**, the rejoicing on the shores of the Red Sea, Ex. xv. But the language is a reminiscence of the prophecies of the Exodus from Babylon, Is. xxxv. 10; li. 11; lv. 12.

44. **And he gave them the lands of the nations,**
And they took possession of the labour of the peoples.

See Deut. vi. 10, 11.

45. The object of God's favour to Israel was
That they might keep his statutes,
And observe his laws,

Praise ye the LORD.

and obedience was the condition of their retaining these blessings. Cp. lxxviii. 7; Deut. iv. 1, 40; xxvi. 17, 18; and the terms in which the purpose of Abraham's call is described in Gen. xviii. 19 (R.V.).

Praise ye the LORD] This **Hallelujah** is omitted by the LXX and Syr.; see note on civ. 35: but the recital of God's mercies fitly concludes with a call to praise.

PSALM CVI.

This Psalm, as has already been remarked, is a companion to the preceding one. It may well have been composed by the same poet: at any rate it belongs to the same period. It is in the main a confession of the faithlessness and ingratitude which had marked every step of Israel's history, a confession which is the fitting preface to a prayer for the restoration of the nation. It breathes the spirit of Solomon's prayer at the Dedication of the Temple (1 Kings viii). A similar confession is found in Neh. ix: Dan. ix and Baruch ii should also be compared. *Vv.* 1, 47, 48 form the conclusion of the anthem in 1 Chr. xvi. 34—36.

The Psalmist begins with an invitation to praise Jehovah for His infinite mercy and goodness, for these attributes are the ground of his confidence in appealing to Him once more to save His people; and he adds a personal prayer that he may be permitted himself to rejoice in the sight of the renewed prosperity of Jehovah's people (1—5).

But Israel—and Israel of the present is one with Israel of the past—has sinned grievously (6). The national history is one long record of failure to understand God's purpose and of resistance to His Will. The Psalmist recites typical instances of their sins from the Exodus to the Entry into Canaan (7—33); and referring in general terms to their subsequent history (34—46) concludes with a prayer for restoration (47) to which the long confession of sin is clearly intended to lead up.

Thus the historical retrospect is set in a liturgical framework. The introductory call to praise is not inappropriate, for without the acknowledgement of God's invincible goodness the recollection of Israel's sins would be hopelessly crushing. But the confession of those sins is the necessary condition of the removal of their punishment; and the prayer for restoration, short as it is, is obviously the goal towards which the whole Psalm is directed.

Note the author's familiarity with Isaiah lxiii and Ezek. xx.

106 Praise ye the LORD.

1—5. The Psalmist prefaces his Psalm of penitence with a call to praise Jehovah for that unfailing goodness which is the ground of Israel's hope in its present extremity; and with a prayer that he himself may be privileged to see and share in the restoration of Jehovah's people.

1. *Praise ye the LORD*] Heb. **Hallelujah.** See on civ. 35. Here and

O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD?
Who can shew forth all his praise?
Blessed *are* they that keep judgment,
And he that doeth righteousness at all times.
Remember me, O LORD, with the favour *that thou bearest* unto thy people:

elsewhere the initial Hallelujah is omitted in P.B.V., being regarded, as in LXX and Vulg., as a kind of title only.

O give thanks...for ever] A liturgical formula, found in the Psalter only in post-exilic Psalms (cvii. 1; cxviii. 1; cxxxvi. 1; cp. c. 5; Ezra iii. 10, 11; 1 Macc. iv. 24), but in familiar use before the Exile. See Jer. xxxiii. 11, and note the slight difference in the form, which militates against the view that the words are an interpolation there.

good] LXX rightly χρηστός, for it is not Jehovah's essential goodness that is meant, but His kindness and graciousness towards Israel. Cp. Is. lxiii. 7.

for his mercy endureth *for ever*] Israel's sin cannot exhaust Jehovah's lovingkindness.

2. No human voice can adequately celebrate Jehovah's mighty acts (*v.* 8; xx. 6) or worthily proclaim His praises (xviii. 3). For the thought cp. xl. 5; and note again the parallels in Is. lxiii. 15 ("thy mighty acts," R.V.), 7 ("the praises of the LORD").

3. From the thought of the mercy and the might of Jehovah which are the ground of Israel's hope, the Psalmist passes to the conditions of participation in the blessing for which he looks. Happy those who obey the Divine command, given in view of the near approach of Jehovah's Advent to redeem, "Keep judgement, and do righteousness" (Is. lvi. 1): who repent, and bring forth fruits worthy of their repentance, conforming their conduct to the demands and will of God. Cp. cv. 45.

he that doeth] Probably we should read *they that do* (עֹשֵׂי for עֹשֶׂה, with LXX and other Versions).

4, 5. The personal prayer of these verses is not out of place. It need not be regarded as the devout ejaculation of some reader, written in the margin of his copy, from which it was subsequently introduced into the text. Nor can it be regarded as the prayer of the community personified, for the speaker distinguishes himself from the community in *v.* 5.

It should be compared with the prayers interspersed in Nehemiah's memoirs (v. 19; vi. 14; xiii. 14, 22, 31), and with the earnest desire of the author of Ps. lxxxix (*vv.* 46 ff.) that he may live to see the restoration. Doubtless every individual who used the Psalm would appropriate it to himself. The LXX reads 'remember *us*...visit *us*,' but this is probably only an assimilation to *v.* 6.

with the favour that thou bearest *unto thy people*] Lit. *with* (or *in*) *the favour* (or *acceptance*) *of thy people*. In Is. xlix. 8 'a time of *acceptance*' stands in parallelism with 'a day of salvation.' The Psalmist

O visit me with thy salvation;
5 That *I* may see the good of thy chosen,
That *I* may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation,
That *I* may glory with thine inheritance.
6 We have sinned with our fathers,
We have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.
7 Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt;
They remembered not the multitude of thy mercies;
But provoked *him* at the sea, *even* at the Red sea.

prays that he personally may share in the restoration of Israel to Jehovah's favour (lxxxv. 1) by His saving mercy.

5. That I may see with satisfaction **the prosperity of thy chosen ones** (cv. 6, 43).

thy nation] The word *gōy*, 'nation,' is not unfrequently applied to Israel, but only here and in Zeph. ii. 9 is Israel spoken of as *Jehovah's nation*. In the plural it is used of heathen nations only.

thine inheritance] Cp. Deut. iv. 20; ix. 29; and for the verse generally, Ps. xxxiii. 12; "the *nation* whose God is Jehovah, the people he hath *chosen* for his inheritance."

6. The main purpose of the Psalm is here stated;—the confession of the constant sin of Israel throughout its history. The acknowledgement that the nation does not deserve the mercy for which it prays is the primary condition of forgiveness and restoration to God's favour. The language is borrowed from Solomon's prayer (1 Kings viii. 47); and the accumulation of synonyms expresses the manifold character of Israel's guilt. Cp. Daniel's confession (Dan. ix. 5), and the confession of the Jews in Babylon in Baruch ii. 12.

We have sinned with our fathers] "This remarkable expression is not to be weakened to mean merely that the present generation had sinned like their ancestors, but gives expression to the profound sense of national solidarity, which speaks in many other places of Scripture, and rests on very deep facts in the life of nations and their individual members" (Maclaren). Cp. Lev. xxvi. 39, 40; Jer. iii. 25; xiv. 20.

7—12. The first instance of Israel's sin; their unbelief and murmuring at the Red Sea.

7. Our fathers in Egypt considered not thy marvellous works:
They remembered not the abundance of thy lovingkindnesses,
And were rebellious at the sea, even at the Red Sea.

Lack of insight (cp. Deut. xxxii. 28, 29) had characterised Israel from the first. The 'marvellous works' of Jehovah (cv. 2, 5) by which He had effected their deliverance from Egypt (lxxviii. 43 ff.; cv. 27 ff.) had failed to make them understand His character and will. So short were their memories, that at the first sign of danger, they rebelled against God's purpose to deliver them (Ex. xiv. 11, 12). Again and again forgetfulness of past mercies is stigmatized as the source of sin. Cp. *vv.* 13,

Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, 8
That *he* might make his mighty power to be known.
He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: 9
So he led them through the depths, as *through* the wilderness.
And he saved them from the hand of him that hated *them*, 10
And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.
And the waters covered their enemies: 11
There was not one of them left.
Then believed they his words; 12
They sang his praise.
They soon forgat his works; 13
They waited not for his counsel:
But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, 14
And tempted God in the desert.

21; lxxviii. 11; Deut. xxxii. 18; and often; and Israel's sin is described as 'rebellion';—obstinate resistance to the revealed Will of God. Cp. *vv.* 33, 43, and lxxviii. 17, note.

The construction of the last line is suspicious, and it has been plausibly conjectured that we should read, *and rebelled against the Most High at the Red Sea*, as in lxxviii. 17, 56.

8. Their conduct would have justified Jehovah in taking them at their word, and leaving them to return to Egypt, but *for His name's sake*, in order to uphold His character as a God of mercy, and to make known His might to the nations of the earth (lxxvii. 14), He delivered them. Cp. Ezek. xx. 9, 14, a chapter evidently in the Psalmist's mind: see *vv.* 26, 27.

9. *He rebuked* &c.] Cp. civ. 7; Is. l. 2; Nah. i. 4.

so he led them &c.] Apparently a reminiscence of Is. lxiii. 13: cp. Is. li. 10.

as through a *wilderness*] I.e. on dry ground, Ex. xiv. 22. But R.V. marg. may be right in rendering *pasture-land*, suggesting the metaphor of a flock, lxxvii. 20.

11. See Ex. xiv. 28. *enemies*] R.V. adversaries.

12. See Ex. xiv. 31; xv. 1. The allusion to their momentary faith and gratitude emphasises the relapse which *v.* 13 goes on to describe.

13—15. A second instance of Israel's sin, in murmuring for flesh.

13. *They soon forgat*] Lit., *They made haste* (*and*) *forgat*. They had gone but three days journey from the Red Sea, when they murmured for water (Ex. xv. 22 ff.); only six weeks later they were murmuring for food (Ex. xvi. 2 ff.); and in Rephidim again they murmured for water (Ex. xvii. 2 ff.). In their faithless impatience they refused to wait for God's plan of providing for their wants.

14. A glance at yet another occasion of murmuring and its punish-

15 And he gave them their request;
But sent leanness into their soul.
16 They envied Moses also in the camp,
And Aaron the saint of the LORD.
17 The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan,
And covered the company of Abiram.
18 And a fire was kindled in their company;
The flame burnt up the wicked.
19 They made a calf in Horeb,
And worshipped the molten image.
20 Thus they changed their glory
Into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.

ment. The phrase **and they fell a lusting**, is taken from Num. xi. 4; cp. Ps. lxxviii. 29, 30. They *tempted* God, i.e. tested Him, put Him to the proof, by questioning His will and ability to provide for them (lxxviii. 18).

15. They complained "Our soul is dried away" (Num. xi. 6), our vitality is exhausted; but the satisfaction of their self-willed lust brought sickness and death not life and vigour, and "the graves of lust" marked the scene of their sin and its punishment.

16—18. A third sin; jealousy of the authority of Moses and Aaron (Num. xvi).

16. *the saint of the LORD*] **The holy one of Jehovah**, specially set apart and consecrated to His service. The malcontents alleged that all the congregation were holy, and Moses answered that Jehovah would shew who were His, and who were holy (Num. xvi. 3—7).

17. The Psalmist follows Deut. xi. 6 in naming Dathan and Abiram only. Korah's family did not perish (Num. xxvi. 11).

18. "A fire came out from Jehovah, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense" (Num. xvi. 35). The rebels are called "these wicked men" in Num. xvi. 26.

19—23. A fourth sin; the worship of the calf (Ex. xxxii; Deut. ix. 8 ff.).

19. *in Horeb*] The name always given to Sinai in Deuteronomy (except xxxiii. 2). The use of it seems to indicate that the narrative of Deut. ix. 8 ff. was in the Psalmist's mind. Cp. notes on *vv.* 23, 25, 29. In Horeb, "the mount of God" (Ex. iii. 1), when Jehovah was revealing Himself to them (Deut. iv. 10 ff.), they limited and materialised and degraded the idea of Deity, in defiance of the express commandment which He had given them.

20. **So they exchanged their glory**
For the likeness of an ox that eateth grass.

Jehovah was the glory of Israel (Deut. iv. 6—8; x. 21); and this spiritual invisible God they bartered for the likeness of an animal, such

They forgat God their saviour, 21
Which had done great *things* in Egypt;
Wondrous works in the land of Ham, 22
And terrible *things* by the Red sea.
Therefore he said that *he* would destroy them, 23
Had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach,
To turn away his wrath, lest *he* should destroy *them*.
Yea, they despised the pleasant land, 24
They believed not his word:
But murmured in their tents, 25
And hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD.

as they were forbidden to make (Deut. iv. 16—18; Ex. xx. 4). Cp. Jer. ii. 11.

The reading *their glory* is reckoned as one of the eighteen *Tiqqūnē Sōpherīm*[1] or 'corrections of the scribes,' and is said to stand for 'his glory.' It is disputed whether the term means that the scribes actually altered the text from motives of reverence, or held that *his glory* was what the Psalmist would have written, had he not purposely avoided it as an indecorous expression. It is noteworthy that some MSS of the LXX (ℵ$^{c.a}$ ART) read *his glory*, and to this form of the text St Paul refers in Rom. i. 23. The Targ. gives 'the glory of their Lord.'

21, 22. These verses emphasise the ingratitude of the Israelites. *The land of Ham* as in cv. 23, 27 from lxxviii. 51.

23. Cp. Ex. xxxii. 10 ff.; Num. xiv. 11 ff. But the language is taken from Deut. ix. 25, 26, where the same *two* words for 'destroy' are used as here.

stood before him in the breach] A military metaphor. Moses confronted God with intercession like the warrior who stands in the breach of the city wall to repel the enemy at the risk of his life. Cp. Ezek. xxii. 30; Jer. xviii. 20.

24—27. A fifth instance of Israel's sin; their unbelief and cowardice on the return of the spies (Num. xiii, xiv).

24. *They despised*, or *rejected* (as Num. xiv. 31), *the pleasant land* (Jer. iii. 19; Zech. vii. 14), the delightful and desirable land of Canaan; and disbelieved Jehovah's promise to give it them (Deut. i. 32).

25. *But murmured in their tents*] From Deut. i. 27, a graphic picture of the Israelites sulking in their tents instead of boldly preparing for the march.

[1] See Ginsburg, *Introd. to the Heb. Bible*, pp. 347 ff., who holds the view that the Scribes altered the text: and Barnes in the *Journal of Theol. Studies*, i. 387 ff., who holds that the so-called corrections are interpretations not readings.

26 Therefore he lifted up his hand against them,
To overthrow them in the wilderness:
27 To overthrow their seed also among the nations,
And to scatter them in the lands.
28 They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor,
And ate the sacrifices of the dead.
29 Thus they provoked *him* to anger with their inventions:
And the plague brake in upon them.

26. So he lifted up his hand unto them
That he would make them fall in the wilderness.

i.e. He swore solemnly. See Num. xiv. 28, 29, 32, "As I live...your carcases shall fall in the wilderness." 'Lifting up the hand' to heaven is man's gesture as he appeals to God in an oath. The phrase is transferred 'anthropopathically' to God. Cp. Ex. vi. 8; Deut. xxxii. 40; Ezek. xx. 23.

27. And that he would scatter their seed among the nations,
And disperse them in the lands.

Almost verbatim as Ezek. xx. 23, from which the text must be corrected here. The Heb. words for *make to fall* and *scatter* are very similar (הפיל...הפיץ), and the former was accidentally repeated from *v.* 26. The allusion to the warnings of banishment from the land in Lev. xxvi. 33; Deut. xxviii. 64 is suggested by the mention of the exclusion of the faithless Israelites from the land in *v.* 26.

28—31. A sixth instance; the sin of participating in the abominations of Moabite worship.

28. *They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor*] Attached themselves as devotees. The phrase is taken from Num. xxv. 3. The LXX renders ἐτελέσθησαν, *they were initiated*; but the word does not necessarily denote this. *Peor* seems to have been a locality (Num. xxiii. 28), and *Baal-peor* was the particular Baal worshipped there by the Moabites.

and ate the sacrifices of the dead] See Num. xxv. 2. By *the dead* are meant heathen gods in contrast to Jehovah, the one living and true God. Cp. cxv. 4 ff.; Jer. x. 11; Wisdom xiii. 10, "Miserable were they, and in dead things were their hopes, who called them gods which are works of men's hands"; xv. 17; 1 Cor. xii. 2. Participation in the sacrificial feasts of the Moabites was an act of communion with their lifeless gods. There is no reference to ancestor worship or funeral offerings.

29. And they provoked (him) to anger with their doings] Again a Deuteronomic expression. Cp. Deut. iv. 25; ix. 18; xxxi. 29; xxxii. 16, 21. 'Inventions' of A.V. reproduces the Vulg. *adinventionibus suis.*

a *plague*] Lit. *smiting*; either the slaughter of the guilty Israelites which had been enjoined (Num. xxv. 4, 5), or, as the word commonly means (Num. xvi. 48, &c.), a divinely inflicted pestilence.

Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: 30
And *so* the plague was stayed.
And *that* was counted unto him for righteousness 31
Unto all generations for evermore.
They angered *him* also at the waters of strife, 32
So that it went ill with Moses for their sakes:
Because they provoked his spirit, 33
So that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.
They did not destroy the nations, 34

30. *Then stood up Phinehas*] Cp. Num. xxv. 7; and for 'stood,' Num. xvi. 48.

and executed judgment] So rightly Jerome, *diiudicavit*. P.B.V. *prayed* follows the Syr. and Targ.; but this is not the regular meaning of the form of the verb, and does not agree with the history.

and so *the plague was stayed*] From Num. xxv. 8.

31. The zeal of Phinehas was an act of faith. He was a true son of Abraham (Gen. xv. 6): and his reward was "the covenant of an everlasting priesthood" (Num. xxv. 12, 13).

32, 33. A seventh sin; the murmuring at Meribah (Num. xx. 1—13). It is perhaps placed last as a climax, because in this case Moses was involved by Israel's sin. The faith and patience of the leader who had endured so long gave way at last.

32. *They angered* him] Another Deuteronomic word (Deut. ix. 7, 8, 22). The object of the verb is not expressed, but is certainly not Moses but Jehovah as in *v.* 29.

at the waters of strife] Rather, **of Meribah** (Num. xx. 13). The word became a proper name (xcv. 8).

so that it went ill &c.] The people's unbelief was the cause of the impatience and presumption, for which Moses was punished by exclusion from Canaan. Cp. Deut. i. 37; iii. 26.

33. Because they were rebellious against his spirit,
And he spake rashly with his lips.

The cause of Jehovah's anger and Moses' punishment was the rebellion of the Israelites against the guidance of God's spirit, and the rash utterance of Moses which was its consequence. Moses' speech "Hear now, ye rebels! out of this cliff must we fetch you water?" and his striking the rock when he was commanded to speak to it, indicates that his sin consisted in impatience and want of faith.

The usage of the verb and the parallel of Is. lxiii. 10 are decisive in favour of taking *his spirit* to mean God's spirit not Moses' spirit: and though the term rebellion is applied to the conduct of Moses and Aaron in Num. xx. 24, *they were rebellious* must here refer to the Israelites and not to them, as Aaron has not been mentioned. *v.* 33 *a* will thus be parallel to *v.* 32 *a*, and 33 *b* to 32 *b*.

34—39. The continued disobedience of Israel even after the Entry

Concerning whom the LORD commanded them:
35 But were mingled among the heathen,
And learned their works.
36 And they served their idols:
Which were a snare unto them.
37 Yea, they sacrificed their sons
And their daughters unto devils,
38 And shed innocent blood,
Even the blood of their sons and of their daughters,
Whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan:
And the land was polluted with blood.
39 Thus were they defiled with their own works,

into Canaan. Neglecting the command to exterminate the Canaanites they became infected by their abominations.

34. **They did not destroy the peoples,**
As Jehovah had commanded them.

For the command so often repeated see Ex. xxiii. 32, 33; xxxiv. 12 ff.; Deut. vii. 2 ff.: and for the neglect of it, Judg. i. 21, 27, 29 ff., ii. 1 ff.

35. **But mingled themselves with the nations** (R.V.), by matrimonial alliances (Ezra ix. 2) and intercourse generally (Judg. iii. 5, 6).

36. *which were* &c.] **And they became a snare unto them,** as they had been forewarned, Ex. xxiii. 33, &c. P.B.V. *which turned to their own decay* = which proved their ruin.

37. *unto devils*] Better, **demons** (LXX Syr. Targ. Jer.). From Deut. xxxii. 17, "they sacrificed unto demons, which were no god," the only other passage in the O.T. where the word *shēdīm* occurs. "In Assyrian, *shîdu* is the name of the divinities represented by the bull-colossi, so often found in the front of Assyrian palaces, who were regarded apparently not as gods properly so called, but as subordinate spirits, demi-gods or genii, invested with power for good or evil." Etymologically the Heb. word may mean *lords*, but the precise idea attached to it cannot now be determined. Most probably it "denotes some kind of subordinate spirit or demi-god." Driver on Deut. xxxii. 17.

38. Human sacrifices, the horror of which was intensified by the tender age of the victims and their relation to the offerers, are mentioned as the climax of the abominations of the Canaanites (Deut. xii. 31; xviii. 9, 10), and of the Israelites who copied their ways (Ezek. xvi. 20, 21; xx. 31).

the land was polluted with blood] Cp. Num. xxxv. 33, 34; and for the thought of the defilement of a land by the sins of its inhabitants see Lev. xviii. 24 ff.; Is. xxiv. 5; Jer. iii. 1, 2, 9. The Canaanites had been condemned to extermination for their enormities; but Israel failed to take warning from their fate.

39. **So they were defiled in their works,**

And went a whoring with their own inventions.
Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his 40
people,
Insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.
And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; 41
And they that hated them ruled over them.
Their enemies also oppressed them, 42
And they were brought into subjection under their hand.
Many times did he deliver them; 43
But they provoked *him* with their counsel,
And were brought low for their iniquity.
Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, 44
When he heard their cry:
And he remembered for them his covenant, 45
And repented according to the multitude of his mercies.
He made them also to be pitied 46
Of all those that carried them captives.

And went a whoring in their doings.

As the relation of Israel to Jehovah is expressed by the figure of marriage (Hos. ii. 2 ff., and often), the abandonment of Jehovah for other gods is described as infidelity to the marriage vow. Cp. Ex. xxxiv. 15, 16; Deut. xxxi. 16: &c.

40—46. The alternations of chastisement, pardon, restoration, and relapse in the course of Israel's history. As in Neh. ix. 26 ff., the primary reference is to the period of the judges; but doubtless the verses are intended to be a summary survey of the characteristics of the whole course of Israel's history, leading up to the prayer for restoration in *v.* 47.

40. So Jehovah's anger was kindled against Israel, a standing formula in the Book of Judges (ii. 14, 20, &c.; cp. Deut. vii. 4; &c.), **and he abhorred his inheritance.**

41. *the heathen*] **The nations** (R.V.) in contrast to Israel, Jehovah's people.

43. *but they provoked* him &c.] **But they were rebellious in their counsel.** Self-will was their bane, as before (*v.* 13) when they would not wait for Jehovah's counsel. The verbs are frequentative: repeated deliverances were met by repeated rebellion (Judg. ii. 16, 17).

and were brought low] The Heb. verb closely resembles that in Lev. xxvi. 39, "they that are left of you shall *pine away* in their iniquity," and in Ezek. xxiv. 23; xxxiii. 10, passages which were doubtless in the Psalmist's mind. The change may have been intentional, or it may be due to a scribe's error.

45. Cp. Lev. xxvi. 41, 42.

repented] Cp. xc. 13.

46. *He made them also to be pitied* &c.] In answer to Solomon's prayer, 1 Kings viii. 50. Cp. Neh. i. 11; Dan. i. 9.

47 Save us, O LORD our God,
And gather us from among the heathen,
To give thanks unto thy holy name,
And to triumph in thy praise.
48 Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting:
And let all the people say, Amen.
Praise ye the LORD.

47. This prayer is the point to which the long confession of national sin, from *v.* 6 onward, has been leading up. 'We have sinned, often and grievously; we are bearing the just punishment of our sins: but we confess our guilt; Thy lovingkindness is inexhaustible; once more bring us to our own land, that we may fulfil the purpose of our calling.'

to give thanks &c.] For Jehovah's praise is the end and object of Israel's existence. Cp. Is. xliii. 21; Ps. xxii. 3, note.

48. Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel,
From eternity even to eternity.
And all the people shall say, Amen,
Hallelujah.

The liturgical direction "and all the people shall say, Amen, Hallelujah" seems to imply that the doxology here is not a mere mark of the end of the Fourth Book, but was actually sung at the close of the Psalm. This was the usage in the time of the Chronicler, for in 1 Chr. xvi he prefixes the words, "and say ye," to *vv.* 35, 36 (=*vv.* 47, 48 here), and turns the direction into a statement, "and all the people said, Amen, and praised Jehovah." This doxology then, as Robertson Smith points out (OTJC.², p. 196), differs in character from the doxologies at the close of the first three books. It is a part of the Psalm and not an addition by the collector of the Psalter. For the use of similar doxologies cp. 1 Chr. xxix. 10; Neh. ix. 5. It came however to be regarded as marking the end of a fourth book, although Pss. cvi and cvii are closely connected together, and the division of the fourth and fifth books does not correspond to any difference of source or character, as is the case in the other books. Cp. *Introd.* p. liv.

THE PSALMS.

BOOK V.

PSALMS CVII—CL.

PSALM CVII.

THIS Psalm is a call to thanksgiving addressed to the returned exiles, and enforced by various instances of Jehovah's goodness to men in the manifold perils of life.

i. Introduction (1—3). The prayer of cvi. 47 has been answered. Israel has been ransomed from captivity, and brought back from the lands of exile to its own land. The Psalmist calls upon "Jehovah's redeemed ones" to unite in offering to Him the thanksgiving which was contemplated (cvi. 47 *c*, *d*) as the object of their restoration.

ii. A series of four pictures follows (4—32) vividly representing the goodness of Jehovah in delivering men from the extremity of trouble and danger in answer to their prayers. Each strophe is symmetrically constructed. First there is a description of the sufferers' plight; then their cry for help and its answer; then a call to thanksgiving, supplemented in *vv.* 9, 16 by the reason for it, in *vv.* 22, 32 by an amplification of the appeal. The double refrain with its variations (*vv.* 6—9; 13—16; 19—22; 28—32) is strikingly effective.

1. Travellers through the desert who have lost their way and are on the point of perishing from hunger and thirst are guided to an inhabited city (4—9).

2. Prisoners in the dungeon, or exiles who are like prisoners, suffering the punishment of their transgressions, are released (10—16).

3. Sick men, whose sickness is a chastisement for their sin, are restored to health (17—22).

4. Sailors, all but wrecked in a terrific storm, are brought safe to their destination (23—32).

iii. Here the structure and subject change. The refrains disappear, and in place of the vivid pictures of life we have the Psalmist's reflections on the vicissitudes in the fortunes of countries and of men regarded as a proof of the providential government of the world.

1. Jehovah smites a fruitful land with barrenness for the wickedness of its inhabitants, and transforms a wilderness into a fertile home for the poor and needy (33—38).

2. If they are oppressed He defends them, and confounds their oppressors, to the joy of the righteous, and the discomfiture of the wicked (39—42).

iv. The Psalm ends with an exhortation to mark and ponder such facts as these which are proofs of Jehovah's lovingkindness (43).

The connexion of the central part of the Psalm with the introduction requires some further consideration. The pictures which it contains are scenes from real life, chosen to illustrate God's goodness in answering men's prayers in circumstances of trial and suffering, and to enforce the duty of thanksgiving. But since the Psalm opens with an exhortation to the returned exiles, it can hardly be doubted that they are meant to see in these pictures not only general proofs of God's goodness, but illustrations of their own experience. Israel had been on the point of perishing in the great desert of the world. It had been imprisoned for

its transgressions in the gloomy dungeon of exile, and had lain there crushed and hopeless. It had been sick unto death through its own sin. It had been all but swallowed up in the vast sea of the nations. The scenes are at once fact and figure; scenes from life, yet intended to represent Israel's experience. This is especially clear in *vv.* 10—16, where some touches are obviously national not personal.

The unity of the Psalm has been called in question. It has been suggested that *vv.* 1—3 are an introduction, prefixed to a Psalm of more general import, in order to adapt it for liturgical use: and again that *vv.* 33—43 are an appendix, attached to the original Psalm by a later and inferior poet. The suggestion is plausible but unnecessary. The connexion between the introduction and the main part of the Psalm is intelligible, and the main part of the Psalm is suitable to the circumstances of the returned exiles; while the latter part, if (to our taste) somewhat inferior in form and vigour, offers consolation and encouragement to them in view of the vicissitudes of fortune to which they had been or were likely to be exposed. It has moreover links of connexion in style and language with the earlier part: *v.* 36 for example refers back to *vv.* 4, 5: and the dependence on Job and Is. xl—lxvi, which is a marked feature of the earlier part, is even more noticeable here. It is however curious that *vv.* 23—28 and 40 are to be marked, according to Massoretic tradition, with 'inverted nūns' [i.e. the letter *n*, נ], which are supposed to be the equivalent of brackets, and to mark some dislocation of the text or uncertainty in regard to it. Why *vv.* 23—28 should be so marked is not obvious, but it is not improbable that *vv.* 39 and 40 should be transposed. See Ginsburg, *Introd. to Heb. Bible*, pp. 341 ff.

The Psalm plainly belongs to the post-exilic period, but to what part of it is uncertain. Its tone however would seem to point to the restoration being still comparatively recent.

Notwithstanding the division of the books, it is closely related to the preceding Psalms. Pss. cv, cvi, cvii may be said to form a trilogy. Ps. cv celebrates God's goodness in the choice of Israel and the deliverance from Egypt: Ps. cvi is a confession of Israel's obstinate rebellion against God's purpose for it: Ps. cvii is a call to thanksgiving for its restoration from exile. They refer, broadly speaking, to three successive periods of the national history. The first contains the fulfilment of the promise, "He gave them *the lands of the nations*" (cv. 44): the second contains the warning that "He would scatter them *in the lands*" (cvi. 27); the third relates the restoration, "He gathered them *out of the lands*" (cvii. 3). The refrain of *vv.* 6, 13, 19, 28 is an echo of cvi. 44: with *v.* 2 cp. cvi. 10; with *v.* 11 cp. cvi. 13, 33, 43; with *v.* 20 cp. cv. 19.

107 O give thanks unto the LORD, for *he is* good:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.

1—3. An invitation to the returned exiles to join in grateful confession of Jehovah's lovingkindness.

1, 2. The Psalm begins, like Ps. cvi, with the regular liturgical

Let the redeemed of the LORD say *so*, 2
Whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;
And gathered them out of the lands, 3
From the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.

They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; 4

doxology. This "the redeemed of Jehovah" are called to recite (*v.* 2) in grateful acknowledgement of His mercy and in fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy (xxxiii. 11) that there should again be heard in Jerusalem "the voice of them that say, Give thanks to Jehovah of hosts, for Jehovah is good, for his mercy endureth for ever." Cp. cxviii. 1—4.

the redeemed of the LORD] The phrase is taken from Is. lxii. 12 (cp. Is. xxxv. 9, 10; li. 10, 11; lxiii. 4), and clearly denotes the Israelites who had been released from exile in Babylon and elsewhere, and brought home to Jerusalem.

from the hand of the enemy] Rather, **from the clutch** (lit. *hand*) **of adversity**. Cp. the use of the same word in *v.* 6 &c. (A.V. *trouble*).

3. *gathered them out of the lands*] In accordance with many a prophetic promise (Jer. xxxii. 37; Ezek. xx. 34; &c.); cp. the prayer of cvi. 47.

from the east &c.] "From the four quarters of the earth," Is. xi. 12; xliii. 5, 6. Israelites from many lands doubtless returned to join the newly-founded community in Jerusalem.

from the south] Heb. *from the sea*, which according to general usage means *the west*. The Targ. explains it to mean 'the southern sea,' the Arabian gulf or the Indian ocean; possibly it may denote the southern part of the Mediterranean, washing the shore of Egypt: but on the whole it seems most probable that the Psalmist borrowed the phrase "from the north and from the sea" from Is. xlix. 12, and does not strictly enumerate the points of the compass. 'The sea' or 'west' there denotes the islands and coasts of the Mediterranean (Is. xi. 11). A slight change of the text, YĀMÎN for YĀM, would give the usual word for *south* (lxxxix. 12), but the text is supported by the Versions.

4—9. First example of Jehovah's lovingkindness to men: the deliverance of travellers who had lost their way in the desert and were on the point of perishing, doubtless a common experience. Cp. Job vi. 18—20.

4. *They wandered* &c.] The subject of the verb is to be supplied, according to a common Hebrew idiom, from the verb itself. We might paraphrase the words 'There were travellers who had lost their way in the desert.' The absence of any expressed subject has led some commentators to connect *vv.* 2, 3 with *v.* 4. But this ruins the symmetry of the Psalm. If *vv.* 1—3 are regarded as a general introduction, each stanza will begin with a description of the plight of the sufferers whose deliverance is subsequently described.

in a solitary way] R.V. **in a desert way**. But the phrase is a

They found no city to dwell in.
5 Hungry and thirsty,
Their soul fainted in them.
6 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble,
And he delivered them out of their distresses.
7 And he led them forth by the right way,
That *they* might go to a city of habitation.
8 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness,
And *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!
9 For he satisfieth the longing soul,
And filleth the hungry soul *with* goodness.
10 Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,

questionable one; and it is preferable to follow the LXX[1] and Syr. in reading, *They wandered in the wilderness, in the desert; the way to a city of habitation they found not.*

no city to dwell in] Lit. **no city of habitation**, a phrase peculiar to this Psalm, *vv.* 7, 36; no inhabited city where they might obtain food and shelter.

5. *fainted*] **Was fainting within them**; the imperfect tense graphically pictures their plight.

6. The words for *trouble* (better, **strait**) and *distresses* are coupled together in Job xv. 24.

7. **And he guided them in a straight way,**
That they might go to a city of habitation.

8. **Let them give thanks to Jehovah for his lovingkindness,**
And for his wonderful works to the sons of men.

The A.V. obliterates the connexion of the refrain with the doxology of *v.* 1, and gives it a wrong turn by generalising its exhortation ('Oh that *men* would praise the Lord'). Here and again in *vv.* 15, 21, 31, the subject of the verb is the men whose deliverance has just been described.

9. **Because he satisfied the longing soul,**
And the hungry soul he filled with good.

The words refer to the particular case of those who were perishing with hunger and thirst, and do not, primarily at any rate, express a general truth, as the A.V. suggests. The language is derived from Jer. xxxi. 25; Is. xxix. 8 (A.V. 'his soul hath appetite'); lviii. 10, 11; and Lk. i. 53 is a reminiscence of this verse.

10—16. A second example of Divine goodness, in the liberation of prisoners, or captives languishing in the dungeon of exile in punishment for their rebellion against God. The Targ. interprets the passage of Zedekiah and the nobles of Judah in captivity at Babylon.

10. *Such as sit* &c.] **Those that sat.** The darkness of the dungeon

[1] ὁδὸν πόλεως κατοικητηρίου οὐχ εὗρον, ℵc.a. ART Vg.: the singular reading of ℵ ὁδὸν πόλιν printed in Swete's edition (B is here wanting) may however be held to support the Mass. text, if ὁδόν is transferred to the previous line.

Being bound in affliction and iron;
Because they rebelled against the words of God, 11
And contemned the counsel of the most High:
Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; 12
They fell down, and *there was* none to help.
Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, 13
And he saved them out of their distresses.
He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of 14
death,
And brake their bands in sunder.
Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, 15
And *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!
For he hath broken the gates of brass, 16
And cut the bars of iron in sunder.

Fools because of their transgression, 17

—ancient prisons were usually unlighted vaults—is a figure for misery, especially the misery of captivity and exile. Cp. Is. ix. 2; xlii. 7; xlix. 9; Mic. vii. 8.

the shadow of death] Or, **deathly gloom.** Cp. xxiii. 4; xliv. 19.

being *bound* &c.] A reminiscence of Job xxxvi. 8, "If they be bound in fetters, and be taken in the cords of affliction." The whole context, treating of the remedial discipline of affliction, should be compared. Cp. also Ps. cv. 18, "Whose feet they *afflicted*," and "*iron*" = fetters.

11. Their suffering was the punishment of sin. Cp. *vv.* 17, 34. They resisted the commands of God (cvi. 7, 33, 43); and blasphemously doubted or despised the wisdom and the goodness of His purposes for them. Cp. Prov. i. 30; Is. v. 24; and for general illustration, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16.

12. So that he subdued their heart with travail. Cp. cvi. 42.

they fell down] Lit. *they stumbled*; figuratively as in cv. 37 (note); Is. iii. 8 (A.V. *is ruined*).

15. Let them give thanks to Jehovah for his lovingkindness,
And for his wonderful works to the sons of men.

16. The prophecy of Is. xlv. 2 has been fulfilled. The land of exile was represented as a vast and strong fortress-prison.

17—22. A third example of Divine goodness, in the restoration of those who have been punished with sickness for their sins, based upon Job xxxiii. 19—26.

17. *Fools*] Many commentators think that some word is needed to express the plight of those whose restoration is to be described, and conjecture that we should read *sick* (חולים) instead of *fools* (אולים). This emendation gives a good parallelism:—*Those who are sick by*

And because of their iniquities, are afflicted.
18 Their soul abhorreth all *manner of* meat;
And they draw near unto the gates of death.
19 Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble,
He saveth them out of their distresses.
20 He sent his word, and healed them,
And delivered *them* from their destructions.
21 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness,
And *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!
22 And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving,
And declare his works with rejoicing.

reason of their course of transgression, and bring affliction on themselves by their iniquities. But the change is unnecessary. The poet looks behind the sickness to the sin which was its cause. *Folly* denotes moral perversity, not mere weakness or ignorance; it leads to ruin. It is the opposite of wisdom, which leads to life. Cp. Prov. i. 7, &c.; Job v. 3. Sickness is commonly regarded in the O.T. as the consequence and punishment of sin. Cp. Ps. xxxviii. 5. That sickness is not necessarily a proof of sin was one of the great lessons taught in the Book of Job.

their transgression] Lit. *the way of their transgression*, implying persistence in evil courses.

are afflicted] The form of the verb conveys the meaning, *bring affliction on themselves.*

18. Their soul loatheth all manner of food,
And they draw nigh unto the gates of death.

Cp. ix. 13; lxxxviii. 3.

For the archaism of P.B.V. '*hard* at death's door,' cp. note on Ps. lxiii. 8.

20. *He sent* &c.] R.V. **sendeth**...**healeth**...**delivereth.** Jehovah's word is here almost personified as a delivering angel. It is His messenger (cxlvii. 15, 18), which performs His will (Is. lv. 11; cp. ix. 8). It is His instrument in His dealings with men (cv. 19) as well as in the work of creation (xxxiii. 6). Such passages prepare the way for the use in the Targums of the periphrasis 'the Word of Jehovah' (*Mêmrā* or *Dibbūrā*) for Jehovah in His intercourse with men; and for the fuller revelation of the personal Word, the Logos (John i. 1). In connexion with this thought, it should be noted that in Job xxxiii. 23 the restoration of the sick man to health of mind and body is attributed to the intervention of "an angel, an interpreter" (or mediator).

from their destructions] Lit. *pitfalls* (Lam. iv. 20); the graves into which they had all but fallen. Cp. Job xxxiii. 18, 22, 24, 28; Ps. cii. 1.

21, 22. Let them give thanks to Jehovah for his lovingkindness,
And for his wonderful works to the sons of men:
And let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving,
And tell of his works with glad singing.

Here and in *v.* 32 the call to thanksgiving is amplified, instead of a reason for it being assigned as in *vv.* 9, 16. Cp. Jer. xxxiii. 11.

They that go down to the sea in ships, 23
That do business in great waters;
These see the works of the LORD, 24
And his wonders in the deep.
For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, 25
Which lifteth up the waves thereof.
They mount up *to* the heaven, they go down *again to* 26
the depths:
Their soul is melted because of trouble.
They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken *man*, 27
And are at their wit's end.

23—32. A fourth example of Jehovah's goodness, in the deliverance of sailors caught in a storm. The Targ.[1] refers it to the voyage of Jonah, and some expressions suggest that Jonah i, ii may have been in the poet's mind; but the reference is quite general. Addison (*Spectator*, No. 489) comments on the sublimity of the Psalmist's description of the storm.

23. *They that go down to the sea*] Or, *go down on the sea*; the sea being apparently below the land. Cp. Is. xlii. 10, and the somewhat different use of 'go down' in Jonah i. 3.

that do business in great waters] As merchants and traders, traversing the open sea, and not merely making coasting voyages.

24. *These see* &c.] **These men have seen.** Jehovah's *works* are the storm, viewed as an evidence of His sovereignty over the elements: *His wonders* (or *wonderful works*, as in *v.* 8 &c.) are His miraculous interposition to still the storm and rescue the sailors.

25. *For he commandeth* &c.] **For he spake, and raised** &c. Cp. cv. 31, 34; Gen. i. 3 &c. The P.B.V., *For at his word the stormy wind ariseth* follows the LXX (Vulg.) and Jer. in presuming a different vocalisation of the Heb. consonants, which may possibly be right.

26. *They mount up*] The sailors, not the waves, as is clear from the next line. Cp. Verg. *Aen.* III. 564,

> Tollimur in caelum curvato gurgite, et idem
> Subducta ad Manis imos desedimus unda.

their soul &c.] **Their soul melteth in evil plight.**

27. *and are at their wit's end*] Lit. *all their wisdom is swallowed up*, or perhaps as in lv. 9, *is confounded*. Their skill in navigation entirely fails them. Cp. Is. xix. 3. A striking parallel to the whole passage is to be found in Ovid, *Tristia*, I. 2. 19 ff.

> Me miserum, quanti montes volvuntur aquarum!
> Iam iam tacturos sidera summa putes.
> Quantae diducto subsidunt aequore valles!
> Iam iam tacturas Tartara nigra putes.
> Rector in incerto est, nec quid fugiatve petatve
> Invenit. Ambiguis ars stupet ipsa malis.

[1] Ed. Lagarde. The text in Walton's Polyglott does not contain the gloss.

28 Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble,
And he bringeth them out of their distresses.
29 He maketh the storm a calm,
So that the waves thereof are still.
30 Then are they glad because they be quiet;
So he bringeth them unto their desired haven.
31 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness,
And *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!
32 Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people,
And praise him in the assembly of the elders.

33 He turneth rivers into a wilderness,
And the watersprings into dry ground;

28. Kay quotes a Basque proverb, "Let him who knows not how to pray go to sea."

he bringeth them &c.] Cp. xxv. 17.

30. *because they be quiet*] Because the waves are calmed. Cp. Jonah i. 11.

unto their desired haven] Lit. *the haven*, or possibly, *the mart, of their desire*. The word *māchōz*, which occurs here only, is rendered *harbour* by the Ancient Versions, but in the Talmud it means *town*. The destination of the sailors, where they intend to dispose of their wares, is obviously meant. The R.V. has wisely restored Coverdale's musical phrase, **the haven where they would be**.

31. Let them give thanks to Jehovah for his lovingkindness,
And for his wonderful works to the sons of men:
32. Yea, let them exalt him in the assembly of the people,
And praise him in the session of the elders.

Let them publicly declare His praises in the temple and in the forum, where the congregation is assembled for worship (xxii. 22, 25), and where the rulers of the people sit in council.

33—43. The style of the Psalm changes, and its subject becomes more general. The refrain disappears, and instead of examples of God's goodness in delivering various classes of men, we have proofs of His providential government of the world in the vicissitudes of countries and peoples.

33—38. Fertile lands are smitten with barrenness for the wickedness of their inhabitants: barren lands are transformed into a fruitful home for the poor and needy.

33. *He turneth*] **He hath turned.** The verbs in *vv.* 33—41 should be translated by the past tense, as referring to facts of experience, not merely to general truths. The Targ. refers *vv.* 33, 34 to the drought in the time of Joel.

into dry ground] R.V. **into a thirsty ground.** *v.* 33 *a* is from Is. l. 2; with 33 *b* cp. Is. xxxv. 7: *v.* 35 is from Is. xli. 18.

A fruitful land into barrenness,
For the wickedness of them that dwell therein.
He turneth the wilderness into a standing water,
And dry ground into watersprings;
And there he maketh the hungry to dwell,
That they may prepare a city for habitation;
And sow the fields, and plant vineyards,
Which may yield fruits of increase.
He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly;
And suffereth not their cattle to decrease.
Again, they are minished and brought low
Through oppression, affliction, and sorrow.
He poureth contempt upon princes,
And causeth them to wander in the wilderness, *where there is* no way.
Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction,

34. *barrenness*] **A salt desert** (Jer. xvii. 6) like Sodom and Gomorrha, Deut. xxix. 23.

35. He hath turned a wilderness into a pool of water, and a dry land into watersprings:
36. And there he hath made the hungry to dwell,
And they have founded an inhabited city,
37. And sowed fields and planted vineyards,
Which yielded fruitful produce.

With *v.* 36 cp. *vv.* 4, 5. In *v.* 37 the R.V. *and get them fruits* is possible, but not in accordance with the general usage of the phrase.

38. In this and the preceding verse there may be an allusion to Lev. xxvi. 20, 22.

39—42. Though trouble may come, Jehovah scatters their oppressors and defends them, to the joy of the righteous and the chagrin of the wicked.

39. And when they were diminished and brought low,
Through oppression, evil, and sorrow,
40. "He poureth contempt upon princes,
And maketh them wander in a wayless waste,"
41. And he set the needy on high from affliction,
And made him families like a flock.

There is no change of subject. The Psalmist is following the fortunes of those whom Jehovah has blessed with prosperity. Temporary reverses may happen to them, but He will not fail them in their need. *v.* 39 is virtually the protasis to *v.* 40, and the construction of *v.* 40 is somewhat awkward, because it is a verbatim quotation from Job xii. 21 *a*, 24 *b*, which the Psalmist has adopted without alteration.

And maketh *him* families like a flock.
42 The righteous shall see *it*, and rejoice:
And all iniquity shall stop her mouth.
43 Whoso *is* wise, and will observe these *things*,
Even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD.

The princes are any tyrannous oppressors; God humbles their pride and confounds their counsels. The Psalmist probably has in mind the troubles of the returned exiles, and intends his words to encourage their faith. [The construction would however be simplified by placing *v.* 40 before *v.* 39 (see above p. 638), thus: *He poureth contempt upon princes... and they are diminished and brought low...and he setteth &c.* He humbles the proud and exalts the humble.]

like a flock] i.e. numerous. Cp. Job xxi. 11; Ezek. xxxvi. 37, 38.

The P.B.V. of *v.* 40, "Though he suffer them to be evil intreated through tyrants, and let them wander out of the way in the wilderness," comes from Coverdale, who derived it apparently from the Zürich Bible[1] (*Introd.* p. lxxiii). The Heb. however cannot bear this meaning.

42. The upright see and are glad;
And all unrighteousness stoppeth her mouth.

All mockery of Israel and blasphemy of Israel's God are silenced. Cp. cxv. 2. The first line is from Job xxii. 19; the second from Job v. 16.

43. Whoso is wise, let him observe these things,
And let them consider the lovingkindnesses of Jehovah.

Cp. Hos. xiv. 9. In such examples as these the wise man will discern the methods of Jehovah's providential dealings with men.

PSALM CVIII.

The first part of this Psalm (*vv.* 1—5) is an enthusiastic utterance of adoration and thanksgiving, taken from Ps. lvii. 7—11. The second part (*vv.* 6—13) is taken from Ps. lx. 5—12. It is an appeal for help against Israel's enemies, grounded upon God's promise to apportion the land to His people, and give them dominion over the neighbouring nations.

Doubtless it was for liturgical use that these two fragments of older poems were combined into a new hymn. But at what time or under what circumstances this was done can only be conjectured. Apparently Israel was threatened by enemies, and the second part of Ps. lx was felt to be an appropriate prayer for their needs. But the complaint of severe disaster with which that Psalm opens was not appropriate, and accordingly a thanksgiving was substituted for it. It seems natural to connect this thanksgiving with the repeated calls to thanksgiving in the preceding

[1] So er sy lasst durch die tyrannen beraubet und geschediget werden: so er sy durch die öden ort, da kein weg ist, hārumb fürt.

Psalms (cv. 1 ff.; cvi. 1, 47; cvii. 1); and the prayer of the second part may have been prompted by some attack or threatened attack on the part of Edom or some other neighbouring nation upon the weak community of the Restoration. The old words of promise and prayer with their historical associations were adapted to new needs. Jehovah had restored His people to their home; thanksgiving for this proof of His lovingkindness and truth was their first duty: but they were exposed to the attacks of envious and malicious neighbours, and His aid was needed to maintain them in secure possession of the land.

Some such thought—apart from the obvious application of *v.* 5—seems to have dictated the choice of this Psalm as a Proper Psalm for Ascension Day. On that day adoration and thanksgiving for Christ's triumph are fitly joined with prayer that He will put forth His power to give His Church the victory over her spiritual enemies.

This Psalm is of interest as proving that no scruple was felt in combining portions of other Psalms for liturgical purposes, and in prefixing to the new composition the title *A Psalm of David* which those Psalms bore. It justifies the assumption upon internal evidence that other Psalms (e.g. Ps. xix) are of composite origin.

Further it is to be noted that the revision of the second main division of the Psalter by the Elohistic editor (*Introd.* p. lv f.) must have preceded the compilation of this Psalm. Pss. lvii and lx were obviously in the compiler's hands in their 'Elohistic' form, for in its use of *Elohim*, 'God,' instead of *Jehovah* this Psalm forms a conspicuous exception to the regular usage of Book v.

A Song *or* Psalm of David.

O God, my heart is fixed; 108
I will sing and give praise,
Even *with* my glory.

1—5. Resolutions of joyous thanksgiving for past mercies, and prayer that God will manifest Himself as the supremely exalted Ruler of the world.

1. My heart is fixed, O God;
I will sing and make melody, yea with my glory.

The Psalmist's stedfast will and purpose is to sing God's praises. Cp. li. 10; cxii. 7; Col. i. 23. In Ps. lvii. 7 *my heart is fixed* is repeated at the end of the first line, and *v.* 8 begins *Awake my glory*. This figure of 'epizeuxis' or emphatic repetition of words is characteristic of Ps. lvii (*vv.* 1, 3, 7, 8), and the poetical effect is much impaired by the abridgement. *Yea my glory* is grammatically in apposition to *I*:—I, yea my soul, the noblest part of me, the image of the divine glory, will sing &c. It is however possible that *also my glory* is a gloss added by some scribe or reader from Ps. lvii. The LXX has added ἑτοίμη ἡ καρδία μου to the first line as in Ps. lvii.[1]; hence, through the Vulg., the P.B.V.

[1] Some MSS add ἐξεγέρθητι ἡ δόξα μου, 'awake up my glory' at the end of the verse; and throughout the Ps. the MSS of the LXX give instructive examples of the tendency of scribes to assimilate parallel texts.

2 Awake, psaltery and harp:
I *myself* will awake early.
3 I will praise thee, O LORD, among the people:
And I will sing *praises* unto thee among the nations.
4 For thy mercy *is* great above the heavens:
And thy truth *reacheth* unto the clouds.
5 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens:
And thy glory above all the earth.

6 That thy beloved may be delivered;

has the repeated *my heart is ready*. The paraphrase of P.B.V. *with the best member that I have* (Great Bible, not Coverdale) is from Münster, *etiam digniori membro meo*.

2. *Awake, psaltery and harp*] There is a special fitness in the call, if this Psalm was compiled at a time when the harp of Israel had long been mute in the Exile (cxxxvii. 2).

I myself *will awake early*] Better, as R.V. marg., **I will awake the dawn.** A bold and beautiful poetical figure. The dawn is often personified (Job xli. 18; Ps. cxxxix. 9). Usually it is the dawn that awakes men; the Psalmist will awake the dawn by his praises before daybreak.

3. I will give thanks unto thee, Jehovah, among the peoples:
And I will make melody unto thee among the nations.

Jehovah (A.V. *LORD*) takes the place of *Adōnai* (A.V. *Lord*) of the 'Elohistic' Ps. lvii. 9. Again the old words would have special significance for the returned Israelites. Jehovah had wrought salvation for them "in the sight of the nations" (xcviii. 2, 3), and therefore they were to publish His praise among them (xcvi. 3; cv. 1).

4. For thy lovingkindness is great above the heavens,
And thy truth (reacheth) unto the skies.

This verse gives the reason for the praises which he purposes to offer. Once more God's lovingkindness and truth had been attested by the deliverance of Israel from exile. Cp. xcviii. 3. The change of '*unto* the heavens' into '*above* the heavens' is a loss to the sense, making the second line an anticlimax.

5. *Be thou exalted*] Or, **Exalt** thyself. Cp. xxi. 13; xlvi. 10. God *is* exalted in majesty (Is. vi. 1); what is needed is that He should manifest His supreme authority (Is. ii. 11 ff.). This verse (the refrain of Ps. lvii, *vv.* 5, 11) forms a fitting transition to the second part of the Psalm, with its prayer for deliverance and expressions of confidence in the help of God.

6—13. Prayer for help, based upon God's promise to give Israel possession of Canaan, and supremacy over the surrounding nations (6—9): with an expression of confidence that God, Who alone can help, will surely give His people the victory (10—13).

6. The A.V. places a semicolon at the end of *v.* 5, but here, as in lx. 5, it is best to take the clause *That thy beloved* ones *may be delivered*

Save *with* thy right hand, and answer me.
God hath spoken in his holiness; 7
I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem,
And mete out the valley of Succoth.
Gilead *is* mine; Manasseh *is* mine; 8
Ephraim also *is* the strength of mine head;

as dependent on the next clause *Save* &c. *Thy beloved ones* are the Israelites. Cp. Deut. xxxiii. 12; Jer. xi. 15.

save with *thy right hand*] Give victory. Cp. *v.* 12 *b*; xliv. 3.

answer me] So the best text here, supported by all the Versions. This reading suits the singular of *vv.* 1—5 better than *save us*, which is found in some MSS and adopted by R.V.

7. *in his holiness*] Or, by his holiness, for 'spoken' is the equivalent of 'promised' or 'sworn.' Cp. lxxxix. 35; Am. iv. 2. God's 'holiness' includes His whole essential nature in its moral aspect, and that nature makes it impossible for Him to break His promise (Num. xxiii. 19; Tit. i. 2). It is equivalent to 'Himself' (Am. vi. 8; Heb. vi. 13, 17, 18). *In his sanctuary* (cp. lxiii. 2) is a possible but less probable rendering.

I will rejoice] Better as R.V., I will exult. God is the speaker. The language is bold, but not bolder than that of Is. lxiii. 1 ff. God is represented as a victorious warrior, conquering the land, and portioning it out to His people. He makes Ephraim the chief defence of His kingdom, and Judah the seat of government, while surrounding nations are treated as vassals. It is possible that the original Psalmist was quoting some actual oracle, but more probably he was reproducing freely in poetical form the drift of the great promise to David (2 Sam. vii. 9, 10). Cp. ii. 7; lxxxix. 19. Though the words in their full meaning could no longer be applicable to the community of the Restoration, they would serve as an assurance of God's purpose to establish them once more securely in His own land.

Shechem...the valley of Succoth] Shechem, as a central place of importance, represents the territory west of the Jordan; Succoth, 'in the vale' (Josh. xiii. 27), somewhere to the south of the Jabbok, between Peniel and the Jordan, represents the territory east of the Jordan. These two places in particular may be named, because of their connexion with the history of Jacob, who halted first at Succoth and then at Shechem, when he returned to Canaan (Gen. xxxiii. 17, 18). God will fulfil His promise to Jacob, apportioning to His people the land in which their great ancestor settled.

8. *Gilead* and *Manasseh*, i.e. the land of Bashan in which half the tribe of Manasseh settled, stand for the territory east of the Jordan and the tribes settled there: *Ephraim* and *Judah* stand for the tribes west of the Jordan. God claims all as His own: therefore all can claim God's protection.

Ephraim &c.] Render with R.V.,

Ephraim also is the defence of mine head;
Judah is my sceptre.

Judah *is* my lawgiver;
9 Moab *is* my washpot;
Over Edom will I cast out my shoe;
Over Philistia will I triumph.

10 Who will bring me *into* the strong city?
Who will lead me into Edom?
11 *Wilt* not *thou*, O God, *who* hast cast us off?

Ephraim, as the most powerful tribe and the chief defence of the nation, is compared to the warrior's helmet: Judah, as the tribe to which belonged the Davidic sovereignty, is compared to the royal sceptre, or, as the same word is rendered in R.V. of Gen. xlix. 10, to which the present passage alludes, 'the ruler's staff.'

9. The neighbouring nations are reduced to servitude. In striking contrast to the honour assigned to Ephraim and Judah is the disgrace of Moab and Edom. Moab, notorious for its pride (Is. xvi. 6), is compared to the vessel which is brought to the victorious warrior to wash his feet in when he returns from battle. The old enemy of God and His people is degraded to do menial service: in other words, it becomes a subject and a vassal.

In close connexion with this metaphor the next line may be rendered, **Unto Edom will I cast my shoe.** Edom is like the slave to whom the warrior flings his sandals to carry or to clean. Haughty and defiant Edom (Obad. 3, 4) must perform the duty of the lowest slave (cp. Matt. iii. 11). The R.V. renders, **Upon Edom will I cast my shoe.** This would mean, 'I will take possession of Edom,' in allusion to an oriental custom of taking possession of land by casting the shoe upon it; but the first explanation agrees best with the context.

over Philistia will I triumph] Or, **will I shout in triumph.** This reading gives a good and simple sense, and may possibly be the original reading. For the various explanations of the difficult text in Ps. lx. 8, *shout thou because of me*, see note there. The LXX has the same rendering in both places, ἐμοὶ (οἱ) ἀλλόφυλοι ὑπετάγησαν, 'unto me the aliens are subjected.'

10. into *the strong city*] *Into the* **fortified** *city*, a different word from that in lx. 9, though with similar meaning. Probably Sela or Petra, the capital of Edom, famous for its inaccessibility (Obad. 3), was meant in the original Psalm.

who will lead me into Edom?] The verb is in the perfect tense, and the R.V. renders, *Who hath led me into Edom?* But such a reference to some previous successful invasion does not suit the context. The Ancient Versions all render by the future, and the perfect is sometimes used in questions in Hebrew to express difficulty or hopelessness. 'Who,' it implies, 'could lead me right into (the preposition is emphatic) Edom? The obstacles are apparently insuperable.' See Driver, *Tenses*, § 19.

11. The emphatic THOU of lx. 10 is omitted here. Two renderings

And wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts?
Give us help from trouble: 12
For vain *is* the help of man.
Through God we shall do valiantly: 13
For he *it is that* shall tread down our enemies.

are possible, that of the A.V., which is that of the LXX and Jer., and that of the R.V., which is substantially that of the Syr. and Targ.;

Hast not thou cast us off, O God?
And thou goest not forth, O God, with our hosts.

The first suits the context better as the answer to *v.* 10 in a tone of confidence which corresponds to that of *v.* 13. Though God has for the moment deserted us, He will now give us help, for we trust in Him alone. The second rendering introduces a note of despair, which does not seem to harmonise with the confidence of *v.* 13. With it the connexion of thought would be, Who can lead us into the enemy's stronghold? None but God, and God has deserted us. Yet even now perhaps He will hear our prayer. With the second line cp. xliv. 9.

12. *from trouble*] Or, as R.V., **against the adversary.** Cp. *v.* 13.
for vain is *the help of man*] Lit. *salvation*. Cp. *v.* 6. It is a delusion (cp. xxxiii. 17) to look to human strength for victory. See xliv. 6, 7; 1 Sam. xvii. 47; Jer. xvii. 5; and cp. Judg. vii. 4, 7; 1 Sam. xiv. 6; 2 Chron. xiv. 11; 1 Macc. iii. 16 ff.

13. *Through God*] Cp. lvi. 4.
we shall do valiantly] Cp. Num. xxiv. 18; Ps. cxviii. 15, 16.
shall tread down our enemies] Cp. xliv. 5; xviii. 42, note. R.V. **adversaries, cp. *v.* 11.**

PSALM CIX.

i. The Psalmist appeals for help against a gang of merciless enemies, who are endeavouring to effect his ruin by false accusations or treacherous slanders. Their hostility is not merely causeless: it is a deliberate return of evil for good, of hate for love (1—5).

ii. Singling out the leader of his persecutors the Psalmist invokes upon him and all that belong to him the retribution which his inhuman conduct deserves. May he be tried and found guilty! May he be degraded from his office and die a premature death! May his children be impoverished and his name speedily become extinct! May all the sins of his ancestors be remembered against him! Because he has deliberately been merciless to the poor and weak, and chosen not to benefit but to injure his neighbour, let him find no mercy or blessing at the hands of God (6—20).

iii. Then, changing his tone, the Psalmist prays once more for help, pleading the pitiableness of his own plight (21—25); and his prayer rises into a confident anticipation of ultimate deliverance, and con-

sequent thanksgiving to Jehovah the champion of the poor and needy (26—31).

Thus the Psalm consists of six stanzas, each of five verses, except the last, which contains six, and falls into three divisions.

Commentators who maintain the Davidic authorship, have supposed it to refer to Doeg, or Ahithophel, or Shimei. But there is nothing in the Psalm to indicate that its author was ever in a position of authority: rather he seems to belong to the class of the poor and oppressed, and to be the victim of a conspiracy of unscrupulous neighbours. Some features in the language point to a late date, and apparently there are allusions to the Book of Job, and to late Psalms, e.g. Ps. cii. Most probably it belongs to the post-exilic period.

It has been held by some that the Psalm is not personal but national; that the speaker is Israel, persecuted and oppressed by scornful and malignant enemies. Others have supposed that the Psalmist writes as the representative of the poor and oppressed classes, and that the enemy whom he denounces is no particular individual, but the typical persecutor of the poor. But alike in its denunciations and in its complaints and in its prayers the Psalm has a personal ring; it is a cry of suffering wrung out by actual circumstances. What those circumstances were we can only conjecture. Possibly the enemy whom he singles out had been the head of a conspiracy to ruin him and his family by false charges and perversion of justice. Such a situation may be indicated by the language of *vv.* 2, 3 (cp. *v.* 31), and it would give special point to the form of retribution which the Psalmist invokes in *vv.* 6 ff. His enemies were evidently of his own countrymen, and the chief enemy was a man of some position (*v.* 8). Was he some noble whom the judge would be ready to gratify, or even the judge himself? Cp. Mic. vii. 3. The narrative in Neh. v shews that national suffering had not taught the wealthier and more powerful members of the community of the Return to exercise consideration towards their poorer brethren. Possibly, though less probably, the Psalmist's enemies were men who had been attempting to ruin him by slander and calumny, such as almost proved fatal to Jesus the son of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus li. 1—10).

The Psalm has much in common with Pss. xxxv and lxix. The complaints of the *causelessness* of the hostility of his enemies resemble those in xxxv. 11 ff.: the imprecations recall those of lxix. 22 ff., but they are more terrible in their detail, and they startle and shock the Christian reader the more because they are levelled not at the guilty man himself alone, but at all his kith and kin.

The moral difficulty of the Imprecatory Psalms has been discussed generally in the *Introduction*, pp. lxxxviii ff. We shall not attempt to justify them. They are the very opposite of the spirit of the Gospel (Matt. v. 43 ff.). But we must endeavour to understand them. They are the expression of the spirit of a dispensation, in which retribution was a fundamental principle. It is the desire for retribution, above all for retribution for gratuitous malice, which finds such passionate expression here. "As he hath done, so shall it be done to him" was the sentence of the Law (Lev. xxiv. 19). "Let me see thy vengeance on them" is the prayer of the persecuted prophet (Jer. xi. 20). "Whoso

rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house" was the maxim of the Wise men in Israel (Prov. xvii. 13). 'Let it be so in the case of my enemy' is the sum and substance of the Psalmist's prayer. 'My enemies have rewarded me evil for good, and plotted to ruin me. Let the evil they have been devising recoil upon the head of the author of the plot. I am innocent; he is guilty: the fate which he would unjustly have assigned to me will justly be his.' Again, the Psalmist is Jehovah's servant (*v.* 28); his cause is Jehovah's cause; if he perishes, Jehovah's honour will suffer (*v.* 21); and his deliverance seems inevitably to involve the destruction of his implacable enemies. Let it be remembered too that we are dealing with poetry, and with the language of burning indignation kindled by cruel wrong. The ruin which the Psalmist imprecates upon the wicked man is doubtless that which he conceives the wicked man had designed to inflict on him.

But there is another side to the Psalmist's character. He is capable of the tenderest love and deepest devotion. He would rather love than hate, rather bless than curse. In this respect the Psalm presents a striking contrast to the Fourth Psalm of Solomon, "Against the men-pleasers," which has been quoted as a parallel. That Psalm is a Pharisaic attack upon the Sadducees, and breathes a spirit of rancorous and bitter religious hatred. Comp. *vv.* 16—25 in Ryle and James' translation.

"Let dishonour be his portion, O LORD, in thy sight;
Let his going out be with groaning, and his coming in with a curse;
Let his life, O LORD, be spent in pain, in poverty and want:
Let his sleep be in anguish and his awaking in perplexities.
Let sleep be withdrawn from his eyelids in the night-season;
Let him miscarry with dishonour in every work of his hands;
Let him enter his house empty-handed;
And let his house lack everything wherewith he can satisfy his desire.
Let his old age be childless and solitary until the time of his being taken away.
Let the flesh of the men-pleasers be torn in pieces by the beasts of the field,
And the bones of transgressors lie dishonoured in the sight of the sun.
Let ravens peck out the eyes of the men that work hypocrisy,
Because they have made desolate with dishonour many men's houses, and scattered them in their lust;
And remembered not God, nor feared God in all these things;
And provoked God to anger and vexed him;
That he should cut them off from the earth, because with craftiness they beguiled the souls of the innocent."

It has been maintained by some commentators that in this Psalm, as in Ps. lxix, the imprecations are not the imprecations of the Psalmist upon his enemies, but those of his enemies upon him, which he quotes. We are to supply *saying* at the end of *v.* 5, and to explain *v.* 20 to mean, 'This is mine adversaries' award unto me; this is the sentence that they would procure against me from Jehovah.' This view has been

advocated by Dr Taylor (*Gospel in the Law*, pp. 244 ff.), and more recently by Dr Sharpe (*Student's Handbook to the Psalms*, pp. 218 ff.). At first sight it is attractive. It accounts for the sudden change of tone and for the transition from the plural to the singular in *vv.* 6 ff. It removes the moral difficulty. But it must be acknowledged that it is a somewhat strained and artificial interpretation. The sudden changes of feeling, and the abrupt transition from the plural to the singular, marking out one of the band of enemies as their leader and representative, find a complete parallel in Ps. lv. If the moral difficulty were removed in this particular case, it would still remain in other Psalms; and in fact the denunciations are not more terrible than those of Jeremiah against his persecutors (see Jer. xi. 18 ff.; xv. 15 ff.; xvii. 18; xviii. 19 ff.; xx. 11 ff.); while the combination of fierce emotion with elegiac tenderness finds a complete analogy in the character of that martyr-prophet.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

109 Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise;
2 For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me:
They have spoken against me *with* a lying tongue.

1—5. The Psalmist appeals to God to interpose and defend him from his persecutors, whose hostility is not only causeless, but aggravated by gross ingratitude.

1. *Hold not thy peace*] Or, Be not silent, but answer my prayer by pronouncing and executing judgement upon my persecutors. Cp. xxxv. 22; xxxix. 12; l. 3; lxxxiii. 1. God's silence is contrasted with the noisy clamour of his foes.

O God of my praise[1]] Thou, Who art the object of my praise, Whom I have had cause to praise in times past, leave me not without cause to praise thee now. Cp. *v.* 30; xxii. 25; and particularly Jeremiah's prayer (xvii. 14) "Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me and I shall be saved; for thou art my praise," based on Deut. x. 21.

2. For a wicked man's mouth, yea a mouth of deceit, have they opened against me:
They have spoken with me with a tongue of falsehood.

It would be easy to smooth the style of the first line by reading 'a mouth of *wickedness*' for '*a wicked man's mouth*'; it is only a question of vowel points in the Heb.: but the Versions support the reading of the Massoretic text, and it points at once to the leader of the gang, who has been set on by his fellows to compass the Psalmist's ruin. The phrase *they have spoken with me* (R.V. *to me*, marg. *against*

[1] In most editions of the Prayer Book the Latin heading is wrongly given as *Deus laudum*, which appears to have been introduced as a rendering of this phrase, the proper heading *Deus laudem* [meam ne tacueris]; 'O God, pass not over my praise in silence', seeming to be unintelligible.

They compassed me about also *with* words of hatred; 3
And fought against me without a cause.
For my love they are my adversaries: 4
But I *give myself unto* prayer.
And they have rewarded me evil for good, 5
And hatred for my love.

me) seems to be used in a forensic sense as in cxxvii. 5. His enemies—there is no need to explain to God who are meant by 'they'—are scheming to effect his ruin by groundless charges supported by false witness. The word for *falsehood* is that used in Ex. xx. 16, and frequently in Proverbs (vi. 19, &c.) of false witness.

3. Yea, with words of hatred have they surrounded me,
And fought against me without cause.

Cp. xxxv. 7, 19, 20; lxix. 4; Prov. i. 11.

"Come and let us smite him with the tongue" was the cry of Jeremiah's opponents (xviii. 18). "Denounce, yea, let us denounce him" (xx. 10).

4. In return for my love they behave as adversaries unto me,
Though I (gave myself unto) prayer.

Their hostility is not merely gratuitous (*v.* 3); it is an actual return of evil for good. The Heb. word for 'adversaries' is characteristic of this Psalm, *vv.* 20, 29; cp. *v.* 6: elsewhere in the Psalter only in xxxviii. 20; lxxi. 13. It may mean not 'enemies' in general, but 'accusers,' opponents in a court of law. For the forcible idiom *I (was) prayer* cp. cxx. 7, "I am peace"; cx. 3, "Thy people are freewill offerings." The A.V., *But I* give myself unto *prayer*, retained in R.V., takes the meaning to be that in his need he commits his cause to God (cp. lxix. 13). But the parallel passage in xxxv. 13 is decidedly in favour of supposing that his prayers for them in past times are meant, and this explanation suits the context best. To these prayers he refers as the proof of his love, the good for which they are now (*v.* 5) requiting him with evil.

5. *they have rewarded me* &c.] Lit. *they have laid evil upon me in return for good.* Cp. xxxv. 12; xxxviii. 20; Jer. xviii. 20.

6—20. The thought of the enormity of this ingratitude overmasters the Psalmist. He breaks out suddenly into a passionate prayer that due retribution may fall upon the chief offender. May the ruin he was planning for another overtake himself!

The singular ('over *him*' &c.), which now takes the place of the plural, may be collective, the Psalmist's enemies being regarded as a whole; or distributive, each one of the mass being singled out: but more probably it fastens upon the leader of the gang (*v.* 2) upon whom rests the real guilt. Cp. for the sudden transition lv. 12 ff., 20 ff.

6, 7. Let this heartless persecutor of the innocent be put upon his trial, and that before a judge as heartless, and with a malicious accuser as unscrupulous, as himself: let him be found guilty, and let his cry for mercy find no hearing.

6 Set thou a wicked *man* over him:
And let Satan stand at his right hand.
7 When he shall be judged, let him be condemned:
And let his prayer become sin.
8 Let his days be few;
And let another take his office.
9 Let his children be fatherless,
And his wife a widow.

6. *Set thou*] **appoint.** He is himself in office (*v.* 8, a cognate word, 'appointment'), but let him be called to account before superior authority.

Satan] Rather **an adversary**, or, **an accuser**, for evidently it is a human tribunal before which he is to be summoned, not, as in Zech. iii. 1, the bar of heaven. The word comes from the same root as *adversary* in *vv.* 4, 20, 29. We may infer from Zech. iii. 1 that it was customary for the accuser to stand on the right hand of the accused in the court.

7. **When he is judged, he shall come out guilty**] Lit. *wicked*: he will be shewn to be what he is and condemned accordingly. Cp. xxxvii. 33.

and his prayer shall be held as a sin] This cannot mean that his plea to the judge or to his accuser (Matt. xviii. 26) will be regarded as an aggravation of his offence, for the word for prayer is never used of requests made to men; but that when he cries to God for help, his prayer will only be regarded as a sin and find no hearing. Terrible as this statement is, it is only in accord with the teaching of many other passages. See lxvi. 18 ff.; Prov. i. 28 ff.; xv. 8; xxi. 27; xxviii. 9; Is. i. 15. A prayer, wrung from the wicked man in his extremity, and prompted by no true penitence, would only be an appeal to God to take the part of the wicked, to the confusion of the moral order of the world. The Versions and commentators generally ignore the fact that the verb in the second line is not in the optative (jussive) form *let it be held*, but a simple future (imperfect), *it shall be held*: and presumably the verb in the first line is also to be translated as a future not an optative, though in this case no distinctive form exists.

8. Let his life come prematurely to an end (xxxvii. 35, 36; lv. 23), and let another man succeed him in his post of authority: or perhaps, let his life be short and withal dishonoured by degradation from his office. Cp. Is. xxii. 19 ff. The rendering *let another take his store* is less probable.

The second clause is quoted together with lxix. 25 in Acts i. 20. Judas was the antitype of the man who requited love with treachery, and the words of Scripture are appealed to as a solemn sanction for filling up his office by the election of another Apostle.

9, 10. The curse of his misdeeds falls even upon his wife and children. This is the climax of awfulness in the imprecation. But a man's family was regarded as part of himself; his punishment was not complete unless they were included in it; and for full retribution they

Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: 10
Let them seek *their bread* also out of their desolate places.
Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; 11
And let the strangers spoil his labour.
Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: 12
Neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children.
Let his posterity be cut off; 13
And in the generation following let their name be blotted out.
Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the LORD; 14
And let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.
Let them be before the LORD continually, 15
That he may cut off the memory of them from the earth.

must share his ruin, for doubtless, this man's schemes, if successful, would have involved the ruin of the Psalmist's family. See *Introd.* p. xcii.

10. *let them seek* &c.] **And seek (their bread) far from their ruined home.** Let the wicked man's home become a ruin, and his children have to get their living away from it. The LXX however points to the reading, *and let them be driven out of their ruined home.*

11. **Let a creditor ensnare all that he hath,**
And let foreigners plunder his labour.

Ensnare is a graphic word for the wily schemes by which an unscrupulous creditor or usurious money-lender would contrive to get possession of all a man's property. For examples of the destitution to which Israelites were sometimes brought by creditors see 2 Kings iv. 1 ff.; Neh. v. 1—7.

12. **Let him have none to continue lovingkindness** to him as represented in his children; **nor any one to have pity on his orphans.**

13. Cp. xxxvii. 28, 38; Job xviii. 13—21. May his sons die childless, and in the next generation their name be removed from the register of citizens. Cp. lxix. 28. An Israelite, with his strong sense of family solidarity, looked forward to living on in his descendants; and the extinction of the family was contemplated as the most terrible of calamities. P.B.V. '*his* name,' follows the Vulg. from the LXX.

14, 15. Let the full penalty for the sins of his ancestors be exacted from him, in accordance with the warning of the law, that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children. See Ex. xx. 5; cp. Matt. xxiii. 32—36.

14. *be blotted out*] From God's book in which it is recorded as a debt. Cp. li. 1.

15. *Let them be*] The iniquity and sin. Cp. xc. 8; Lam. i. 22.

the memory of them] Of his ancestors and all their posterity. Cp. xxxiv. 16.

16 Because that he remembered not to shew mercy,
But persecuted the poor and needy man,
That *he* might even slay the broken in heart.
17 As he loved cursing, so let it come *unto* him:
As he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him.
18 As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment,
So let it come into his bowels like water,
And like oil into his bones.
19 Let it be unto him as the garment *which* covereth *him*,
And for a girdle where*with* he is girded continually.

16—20. This curse is deserved: it is the just retribution for his deliberate choice of evil.

16. Because he remembered not to do lovingkindness,
But persecuted the afflicted and needy man,
And him that was cowed in heart, to do them to death.

He took no thought of the constant teaching of prophets (Hos. vi. 6; Mic. vi. 8) and wise men (Prov. xi. 17). The poor and downhearted and spiritless, men such as the Psalmist represents himself to be (*v.* 22), were his victims.

17. And he loved cursing, and it came to him;
And delighted not in blessing, and it was far from him:
18. And he clad himself with cursing as with his robe,
And it came into his inward parts like water, and like oil into his bones:
19. (So) let it be unto him as the garment in which he wraps himself,
And as the belt wherewith he girds himself continually.

As the text stands, the verbs in *vv.* 17, 18 cannot be rendered as optatives, *let it come...let it be far...let it come.* At first sight it is tempting to make the slight change in vocalisation which would give this sense (cp. LXX and Jer.); but the text admits of a good explanation. The past tenses *it came...it was far...it came* are not to be explained as 'futures of certainty,' water and oil (possibly with a reference to the water of jealousy, Num. v. 22) being regarded as figures for what will inevitably penetrate his whole body. Water and oil naturally denote what is refreshing and strengthening (Job xv. 16; xxxiv. 7; Prov. iii. 8). The wicked man deliberately chose the policy of cursing, and welcomed it to a home in his heart; he banished blessing from his thoughts and purposes. Cursing became the habit of mind, which he assumed each day as naturally as his garment: it was a positive refreshment and invigoration of his whole being. Therefore let it cleave inseparably to him and let him never be able to free himself from it. Let it cling to him like a Nessus-shirt of venom.

Let this *be* the reward of mine adversaries from the LORD, 20
And of them that speak evil against my soul.

But do thou for me, O GOD the Lord, for thy name's sake: 21
Because thy mercy *is* good, deliver thou me.
For I *am* poor and needy, 22
And my heart is wounded within me.
I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: 23
I am tossed up and down as the locust.
My knees are weak through fasting; 24
And my flesh faileth of fatness.
I became also a reproach unto them: 25
When they looked upon me they shaked their heads.

20. Let *this* be *the reward*] Or as R.V., **This (is) the reward**; the wages, as the word implies, which they have earned by their behaviour.
adversaries] See note on *v.* 4.

21—25. From the pitilessness of man the Psalmist turns to implore the mercy of God.

21. **But thou, Jehovah the Lord (or, my Lord), work thou for me**] Lit. *with me*; put forth Thy power so as to shew that Thou art on my side, and prove Thyself all that Thou hast declared Thyself to be. Cp. cxix. 126; Jer. xiv. 7. **God** is printed in capitals in A.V., because it represents the sacred Name **Jehovah**, for which *Elōhīm*, 'God,' was substituted by the Jews in reading when *Adōnai*, 'Lord,' the regular substitute, is joined with it. This combination of names *Jehovah Adonai* occurs in the Psalter only in lxviii. 20; cxl. 7; cxli. 8; and elsewhere only in Hab. iii. 19.
because &c.] Cp. lxix. 16.
22. Cp. *v.* 16; xl. 17; lv. 4.
23. Like a shadow when it declines or is stretched out towards evening (cii. 11), and is about to disappear altogether, so am I made to depart: the form of the verb implies compulsion from without.
I am tossed up and down] Or, **driven away**. The point of comparison is the helplessness of the locust swept along by the wind (Ex. x. 19; Joel ii. 20).
24. *faileth of fatness*] **Hath grown lean and lost fatness** may be the meaning. But more probably, **is shrunken for want of oil.** In his distress he had no appetite for food (cii. 4), and like a mourner (2 Sam. xiv. 2) abstained from the use of oil.
25. **And I—I am become a reproach unto them:**
When they see me, they shake their head,
a gesture of contempt and abhorrence, as though I were the object of the wrath of God. Cp. xxii. 7; lxix. 10—12; Lam. ii. 15; Job xvi. 4.

26 Help me, O LORD my God:
O save me according to thy mercy:
27 That they may know that this *is* thy hand;
That thou, LORD, hast done it.
28 Let them curse, but bless thou:
When they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice.
29 Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame,
And let them cover *themselves with* their own confusion, as *with* a mantle.
30 I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth;
Yea, I will praise him among the multitude.
31 For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor,
To save *him* from those that condemn his soul.

26—31. Repeated prayers for help, ending with calm assurance that the end of suffering is at hand.

26. Cp. xxxi. 16.

27. *that this* is *thy hand*] That thou hast interposed for the deliverance of Thy servant. With *hast done it* cp. *v.* 21, lit. *do thou with me.*

28. **They may curse, but thou wilt bless:**
They arise and are put to shame, but thy servant shall rejoice.

They and *thou* are emphatically contrasted.

29. **Mine adversaries shall be clothed with dishonour,**
And shall wrap themselves in their own shame as in a mantle.

Cp. *vv.* 18, 19; lxxi. 13; xxxv. 26.

30. **I will give great thanks unto Jehovah with my mouth**] Confidently he anticipates the resumption of his former thanksgivings and praises (*v.* 1) in the congregation.

31. A contrast to *vv.* 6, 7. Jehovah stands at the right hand of **the needy** (*vv.* 16, 22) as his advocate and champion, while the accuser is to stand at the right hand of the wicked man. The wicked man is to be found guilty, as he deserves, while his victim will be saved from the persecutors who are minded to *judge his soul*, i.e. condemn him to death.

PSALM CX.[1]

This brief but weighty Psalm—*brevis numero verborum, magnus pondere sententiarum*, as it is called by St Augustine—is addressed to one whom the Psalmist styles *my lord*. He speaks in the language (*v.* 1)

[1] Compare Driver, *Lit. of O.T.* p. 384; Orelli, *O.T. Prophecy*, pp. 153 ff.; Gore, *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 196 ff., 270; Gifford, *The Authorship of the CXth Psalm*; Sharpe, *Psalm CX*; Baudissin, *A. T. Priesterthum*, p. 259 f.

and with the authority (*v.* 4) of a prophet. He has received a Divine revelation concerning his lord, which he communicates to him for his encouragement in the work that lies before him. Jehovah has chosen him to share His throne. He purposes by His own power to subdue all his enemies. Zion is the seat of his kingdom. Zion is the centre from which goes forth his victorious might. There he is to rule, unmoved by the menaces of surrounding enemies. When he musters his people for battle, countless hosts of youthful warriors flock eagerly to his standard, animated by a spirit of loyal devotion and willing self-sacrifice (1—3).

The king,—for though he is not expressly so called, it is implied that he is a king,—is also a priest: not a hereditary priest of the line of Aaron, but a priest by a special Divine appointment, whose priesthood resembles that of Melchizedek. In him the primeval unity of royalty and priesthood, seen in the ancient priest-king of Salem, reappears (4).

The scene changes to the battle-field. When this king goes forth to war, Jehovah goes with him. He stands at his right hand as his champion, executing judgement upon the nations, destroying his adversaries far and wide. The Psalm closes with a picture of the king halting for a moment to refresh himself as he pursues his foes, and then pressing on with fresh vigour to complete his triumph (5—7).

To whom does the Psalm refer? To some historical king, or to the future Messiah? If it could be considered by itself, apart from the New Testament use of it, we should have little hesitation in regarding it as addressed by some prophet to the reigning king, like Pss. xx, xxi, xlv. Lofty as is its language, it does not go beyond that of Pss. ii and lxxii, which we have seen reason to think have a primary historical reference. It introduces a new idea, the priesthood of the king, but all its language can be explained from the peculiar position and significance of the theocratic king, as the earthly representative of Jehovah. He was the embodiment for the time, of God's purpose to establish His kingdom on earth, and therefore prophets and psalmists were taught to speak of him in terms far exceeding the personal significance of any particular king, in words which were to be fulfilled after the lapse of ages with a larger, spiritual meaning.

It has however been very commonly maintained that the reference which our Lord made to this Psalm must, for the Christian student, determine its authorship and interpretation. Many who in every other case regard Messianic Psalms as having a primary historical meaning, feel that here our Lord's authority compels them to hold that this Psalm was written by David, and was addressed by him to the future Messiah, who, he believed, would spring from his family. It is therefore necessary carefully to examine the precise nature of our Lord's reference to the Psalm.

Pharisees, Herodians, Sadducees, Scribes, had been questioning Jesus, with the object of ensnaring Him in His talk. When they had been silenced by the wisdom of His answers, so that "no man durst ask him any question," He proceeded to question His questioners. "How say the scribes that the Christ is the son of David? David himself said in the Holy Spirit,

The Lord said unto my Lord,
Sit thou on my right hand,
Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.

David himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he his son?" (Mark xii. 35 ff.). St Luke's account (xx. 41 ff.) is substantially the same. St Matthew's account (xxii. 41 ff.) differs somewhat in detail, and brings out more clearly the point, that the words are rather a question and a challenge than an assertion and an argument.

"While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying,

The Lord said unto my Lord,
Sit thou on my right hand,
Till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet?

If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his son? And no one was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions."

The question assumes (1) that the Psalm was written by David, (2) that it was inspired, and (3) that it *directly* refers to the Messiah. The inability of the Pharisees to answer shews that these premisses were unhesitatingly admitted. If they could have replied that the Psalm was not written by David, or that it was not inspired, or that it did not refer to the Messiah, they would have had an answer ready to hand. But evidently it did not occur to them that any one of these points could be disputed. David was unquestioningly regarded as the author, if not of the whole Psalter, at least of the Psalms which bore his name; the Hagiographa, if not placed on the same level of inspiration as the Law and the Prophets, were yet held to have been written by inspiration (רוח הקדש = *ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ*); the Psalm, it must be inferred, was commonly understood to refer to the Messiah.

But in assuming these premisses for the purpose of His question, does our Lord stamp them with the sanction of His authority? It has been very truly pointed out that one of His methods of teaching was "to ask men questions such as would lead them to cross-examine themselves closely in the light of their own principles[1]." It seems neither unreasonable nor irreverent to suppose that He was doing so in this instance. Taking His opponents upon their own ground, He desired to arouse their consciences to confess that if only they followed out their own beliefs to their legitimate conclusions, they must look for a Messiah who was more than a mere human descendant of David, and therefore they ought not to be scandalised at His claims. But it does not follow that He meant to endorse the correctness of those beliefs in their entirety. He accepts, for example, their reference of the Psalm to the Messiah. But could He have accepted the Messianic idea which they derived from it? We have no precise information as to the contemporary interpretation of it, but it could hardly fail to have been regarded as supporting the popular

[1] Gore, *Bampton Lectures*, p. 198.

conception of the Messiah as a conquering king, who was to expel the Romans, and reign triumphantly in Zion. To such an interpretation He could not have meant to lend the sanction of His authority. But it was not necessary for him to correct it at the moment. So too with the question of authorship. He was not pronouncing a judgement in criticism. The very notion of criticism at that time was unknown. Tradition held absolute sway. Criticism would have been an anachronism and an impossibility. For His present purpose of stimulating reflection He could accept without correction or inquiry the tradition which was universally current. The Psalm *was* Messianic; the language of it, viewed in the light of history, pointed to the Messiah as One greater than David. The conclusion which the Pharisees ought to have drawn from their own premisses, had they been honest with themselves, was a true one, even if those premisses were not, from a literary and historical point of view, exact.

It would be out of place here to enter upon any discussion of the mysterious question of the limitations of our Lord's knowledge in His life on earth. But it is undoubtedly "easier to conceive of our Lord using this sort of argument, if we accept the position that He, the very God, habitually spoke in His incarnate life on earth, under the limitations of a properly human consciousness[1]."

If then it may be maintained that, in the words of Bishop Thirlwall as given by Bishop Perowne, "we are left very much in the same position with regard to the Psalm as if our Lord had not asked these questions about it," it will not be necessary to isolate it from the other royal Messianic Psalms, which refer in the first instance to the circumstances of the time. The most natural and obvious view will be that it was not addressed by David himself to the Messiah, but by some prophet to David, or to some later king or prince.

Its date and occasion have been much disputed. (1) By some it has been supposed to refer to one of the Maccabees, who were at once priests and princes. Most plausible are the suggestions that it was addressed to Jonathan or Simon. Jonathan was chosen "prince and leader" after the death of Judas, and "took the governance upon him, and rose up in the stead of his brother Judas" (1 Macc. ix. 30, 31). Subsequently he was appointed high priest by Alexander Balas (c. B.C. 153), who also "sent him a purple robe, and a crown of gold" (1 Macc. x. 20). Of Simon, who succeeded Jonathan, expelled the Syrians from the Acra, and secured the independence of the Jews (B.C. 142), it is recorded that "the people made him their leader and high priest"... and "king Demetrius [ii, Nicator] confirmed to him the high priesthood"...and "the Jews and priests were well pleased that Simon should be their leader and high priest for ever, until there should arise a faithful prophet" (1 Macc. xiv. 35, 38, 41)[2].

[1] Gore, p. 198. Cp. the important notes on p. 270. See also Sanday, *Bampton Lectures*, p. 419 f., on the "neutral zone among our Lord's sayings," i.e. "sayings in which He takes up ideas and expressions current at the time and uses without really endorsing them."

[2] A confirmation of the view that the Psalm was addressed to Simon has been found in the fact observed by the Rev. G. Margoliouth, *Academy*, 1892, p. 182, and independently by Prof. Bickell, that the initial letters of the clause *Sit thou* &c. and the

There are however at least two considerations which are fatal to the hypothesis of a Maccabaean origin for this Psalm. (*a*) The Maccabees were first priests and then princes. But the Psalm refers to a prince upon whom is conferred the dignity of a peculiar priesthood, distinct apparently from the hereditary priesthood of the descendants of Aaron. (*b*) The very terms in which Simon's election is recorded, "until there should arise a faithful prophet," testify to the fact that the Maccabaean age was sadly conscious that the voice of prophecy was silent (cp. 1 Macc. iv. 46; ix. 27). How then could a Maccabaean poet presume to speak, as the author of this Psalm does, in the language (*v.* 1) and with the authority (*v.* 4) of prophecy? To these considerations it may be added that it is difficult to suppose that the action of heathen princes in the appointment of Jonathan and the confirmation of Simon could be spoken of in the lofty language of this Psalm.

(2) The coronation of Joshua, as a type of the union of the royal and priestly offices in the person of the Messiah (Zech. vi. 9—15), has been pointed to by others as the occasion of the Psalm. But here again it is the priest who is crowned, not the prince who is declared to be also priest. The triumphant tone of the Psalm moreover, presaging victory for this great ruler, is by no means what might be expected from the circumstances of the struggling community of the returned exiles.

(3) It remains to refer the Psalm to the period of the monarchy. It is true that the king of Israel did not bear the title of priest; but as the head and representative of a priestly nation (Ex. xix. 6) he had a priestly character; and the priesthood spoken of in the Psalm is clearly something special, something distinct from the regular hereditary priesthood. If the Psalm belongs to the period of the monarchy, there seems to be no convincing ground for refusing to refer it to the time of David. The objection that an early poem must have found a place in one of the earlier books rests upon the unproved assumption that no early poetry was preserved independently of the collections contained in these books. At any rate there is no incident recorded in the historical books so likely to have suggested the Psalm as the translation of the Ark to Zion by David. The presence of the Ark on Zion was the outward sign that Jehovah had fixed His throne there. Beside it dwelt David, sitting as it were in the place of honour at Jehovah's right hand as His viceroy. The new king of Jerusalem must reproduce the twofold office of the ancient priest-king of Salem, and become a type of the Messianic king, in whom these offices were to be united (Jer. xxx. 21; Zech. vi. 11—13). Many of those who regard the Psalm as directly Messianic find in this and other incidents of David's life the motive of the Psalm, for "prophecy never seems wholly to forsake the ground of history," and "we must look to some occurrence in David's life for the secret impulse of his song." But if we are free to choose, it seems best to regard the Psalm as addressed to David, and possessing a

three following verses spell the name Simon (שִׁמְעוֹן). But this appears to be a mere accidental coincidence. Acrostics giving the name of the poet or of the person celebrated in the poem appear to have been a comparatively late invention. No tradition of their occurrence in the O.T. has survived.

primary historical meaning rich in promise and encouragement for him in the founding of his new kingdom. This view however does not diminish the profound Messianic significance of the Psalm. "God through His Spirit so speaks in the Psalmist that words not directly addressed to Christ find their fulfilment in Him" (Bp Westcott). As the ages rolled on it was seen that its words were not fulfilled in David, but pointed forward to One Who was at once David's son and David's Lord. And in the event it was seen that the session at God's right hand was the exaltation of Him who had passed victoriously through humiliation and passion to His former glory; that the eternal priesthood of which it speaks was His eternal priesthood of atonement and intercession and benediction; that the victories which it predicts are His assured triumph over the spiritual enemies of sin and death. Comp. generally *Introd.* pp. lxxvi ff.; and the Introductions to Pss. ii, xlv, lxxii.

No Psalm is more frequently quoted and alluded to in the N.T. It was, as we have seen, quoted by our Lord (Matt. xxii. 44; Mk. xii. 36; Lk. xx. 42, 43); and His use of its language as recorded in Matt. xxvi. 64 (=Mk. xiv. 62; Lk. xxii. 69) clearly involved (since its Messianic significance was acknowledged) an assertion of His Messiahship in answer to the High-priest's adjuration. *V.* 1 is applied by St Peter to the exaltation of Christ in His Resurrection and Ascension (Acts ii. 34, 35), and is quoted in Heb. i. 13 to illustrate the superiority of the Son to Angels. Cp. also Mk. xvi. 19; Acts v. 31; vii. 55, 56; Rom. viii. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 24 ff.; Eph. i. 20; Col. iii. 1; Heb. i. 3; viii. 1; x. 12, 13; xii. 2; 1 Peter iii. 22; Rev. iii. 21. *V.* 4 serves as the basis of the argument in Heb. v. 5 ff.; vi. 20; vii. 17 ff. concerning the superiority of Christ's priesthood to the Levitical priesthood.

The selection of the Psalm as a Proper Psalm for Christmas Day needs no comment.

A Psalm of David.

The LORD said unto my Lord, 1

1—3. Jehovah's oracle concerning the king: the assurance of victory over his enemies: the willing service of his people.

1. *The LORD said unto my Lord*] **Jehovah's oracle unto** [or *touching*] **my lord!** The rendering *said* (R.V. *saith*) does not represent the full force of the word *ne'um*, which is commonly used of solemn Divine utterances (Gen. xxii. 16, and frequently in the prophets; in the Psalter elsewhere xxxvi. 1 only). The Psalmist speaks with the authority of a prophet who is conscious of having received a message from God. It makes little difference whether we render *unto* or *touching*. The message is addressed through the Psalmist to the king, and the king is the subject of it. Strictly speaking the 'oracle' is the remainder of the verse 'Sit thou...footstool,' *vv.* 2, 3 being the Psalmist's expansion of it; but the whole Psalm is a Divine message of encouragement for the king.

my Lord] The R.V. has rightly dropped the capital letter, as being

Sit thou at my right hand,
Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.
2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion:
Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

of the nature of an interpretation. 'My lord' (*adōnī*) is the title of respect and reverence used in the O.T. in addressing or speaking of a person of rank and dignity, especially a king (Gen. xxiii. 6; 1 Sam. xxii. 12; 1 Kings i. *passim*, xviii. 7; and frequently).

sit thou at my right hand] The seat at the king's right hand was the place of honour (1 Kings ii. 19; Matt. xx. 21; cp. Ps. xlv. 9; 1 Macc. x. 63). But more than mere honour is implied here. This king is to share Jehovah's throne, to be next to Him in dignity, to be supported by all the force of His authority and power. The idea corresponds to the recognition of the king as Jehovah's son in Ps. ii. 7. Somewhat similarly the king was said to 'sit on the throne of Jehovah' (1 Chron. xxix. 23; cp. xxviii. 5; 2 Chron. xiii. 8). The customs of ancient Arabia supply an illustration. There the *Ridf* or Viceroy sat on the king's right hand, and took precedence next to him. Greek poets spoke of their gods as 'assessors' of Zeus, 'sharing his throne.' Pindar (fragm. 112 Donaldson) speaks of Athene as "sitting on the right hand of the father (Zeus) to receive his commands for the gods." Callimachus (Hymn to Apollo, 28, 29) says that Apollo has power to reward the chorus, "since he sits at Zeus' right hand." But still more to the point, in view of the Messianic interpretation of the passage, is the description of Wisdom in Wisd. ix. 4 as 'Wisdom that sitteth by God on His throne' (*δός μοι τὴν τῶν σῶν θρόνων πάρεδρον σοφίαν*). The residence of the king on Zion in close proximity to the Ark was an outward symbol of his dignity.

until I make thine enemies thy footstool] A metaphor for complete subjugation, derived from the practice described in Josh. x. 24. Cp. 1 Kings v. 3; 1 Cor. xv. 25, and for the promise cp. Ps. ii. 8, 9. *Until* need not of course imply that the session is to come to an end when the subjugation has been effected.

For the N.T. application of this verse to the exaltation of Christ in the Resurrection, see above, p. 665.

2. The sceptre of thy strength shall Jehovah stretch forth (or, send forth) out of Zion] The poet speaks, expanding the oracle. *The rod* or *sceptre* is the symbol of authority and power, the instrument of chastisement. (Cp. Is. x. 24, 26; and Ps. ii. 9, though the Heb. word there is different.) Jehovah wields it on the king's behalf. "He giveth strength unto his king" (1 Sam. ii. 10). For the phrase *rod of thy strength*, cp. Jer. xlviii. 17; Ezek. xix. 12, 14.

out of Zion] The capital of the new kingdom. Cp. ii. 6.

rule thou in the midst of thine enemies] Supply *saying* before this clause. Jehovah speaks. The command is virtually a promise. Though enemies surround the king on every side, he is fearlessly to assume his sovereignty, and victoriously to exercise it. The word for 'rule' is

Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, in 3
the beauties of holiness

used of Solomon in 1 Kings iv. 24; cp. also Num. xxiv. 19; Ps. lxxii. 8 (A.V. *have dominion*).

3. *Thy people* shall be *willing in the day of thy power*] Rather, **Thy people offer themselves willingly** (lit. *are freewill offerings*) **in the day of thy muster** (lit. *army*). The promised victory is not to be won without human agency, and Jehovah inspires the king's subjects with a spirit of loyal self-devotion. Theirs is no forced unwilling service. Their alacrity recalls the days of Deborah, when the people and the governors of Israel "offered themselves willingly" to fight the battles of Jehovah (Judg. v. 2, 9).

The connexion of the clauses in the remainder of the verse is somewhat uncertain. It is possible, with R.V. marg., to join *in the beauties of holiness*, or, as it should rather be rendered, **in holy adornments**, with the preceding clause, and *from the womb of the morning* with the following clause. In this case *from the womb of the morning thou hast the dew of thy youth* might describe the constantly renewed youthful vigour of the king. But it is preferable, with R.V. text, to adhere to the Massoretic accentuation, and join both clauses with what follows, *In holy adornments, from the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth.*

These words will then be a further description of the army mustering to march forth to battle for the king. *Thy youth* denotes the youthful warriors who flock with eagerness to his standard. They are clad *in holy adornments*, as it were an army of priests following their priestly leader. They are compared to *dew*; the mysterious birth of the morning, so abundant and so precious in hot Eastern countries. The comparison, however, need not be limited to a single point. It may further suggest their sudden appearance in obedience to the Divine command, their freshness, their inspiriting effect upon the king, their numbers, the glittering of their armour in the sunshine. Cp. Hos. xiv. 5; Is. xxvi. 19; 2 Sam. xvii. 12; Mic. v. 7, for various emblematical uses of dew. Cp. also Milton, *Par. Lost*, v. 744,

> "An host
> Innumerable as the stars of night
> Or stars of morning, dewdrops, which the sun
> Impearls on every leaf and every flower."

in the beauties of holiness] Rather, **in holy adornments**. The similar phrase in xxix. 2; xcvi. 9 (= 1 Chron. xvi. 29); 2 Chron. xxii. 21; denotes the "holy garments for glory and for beauty" in which the priests were arrayed (Ex. xxviii. 2). Israel was "a kingdom of priests"; these warriors had in an especial manner offered themselves to fight the battles of Jehovah, and their armour was the symbol of their consecration. Those who follow the priest-king are at once priests and warriors.

The reading however is uncertain. The plural HADRĒ (הדרי)

From the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent,
Thou *art* a priest for ever
After the order of Melchizedek.

'adornments' does not occur elsewhere, and a trifling change in a single letter gives the reading HARRĒ (הָרֵי); *on the holy mountains* (lxxxvii. 1), i.e. the mountains of Zion, where the army musters. This reading is supported by Symmachus and Jerome (*in montibus sanctis*), and agrees well with the figure of the dew. Cp. cxxxiii. 3.

from the womb of the morning] The morning is the mother of the dew. For the personification, cp. Job iii. 9; xxxviii. 12, 13.

The rendering of this verse in the LXX deserves notice on account of the doctrinal importance attached to it by many of the Fathers who were dependent on that Version or on the Vulgate. Reading some of the words with different vowels, the LXX rendered it, "With thee is the beginning in the day of thy power, in the splendours of thy saints; from the womb before the daystar I begat thee." The last clause was interpreted of the eternal generation of Christ, or of His birth in the early morning.

4. The priesthood of the king.

Jehovah *hath sworn, and will not repent*] The king is also priest by an immutable Divine decree. The immutability of this decree is affirmed in the most solemn manner possible. The 'oath' of Him who cannot lie is no stronger than His word; He who knows all things from the beginning cannot repent or change His purpose (Num. xxiii. 19; 1 Sam. xv. 29), though man's failure or change may necessitate a temporary interruption of His purpose which appears to finite man in the light of a 'repentance.' But He who is absolutely true and unchanging condescends for man's sake to confirm His word by an oath. Cp. Am. vi. 8; Ps. cxxxii. 11.

Thou art *a priest for ever after the order* (or, *manner*) *of Melchizedek*] Melchizedek, king of Salem, and priest of God Most High (*El Elyōn*), appears in Gen. xiv. 18 ff. as the representative of a true faith in the primitive world. He was a type of that union of civil and religious life, which must be the ideal of the perfect state. The thought here affirmed is that the new king of Jerusalem must hold a position in no way inferior to that of the ancient king of Salem. As the representative of "a kingdom of priests and an holy nation" (Ex. xix. 6) he had a priestly character. As the representative of God to the people and of the people to God he had a mediatorial office. David, when he brought up the Ark into the city of David, laid aside his royal robes and wore the dress of a priest (2 Sam. vi. 14): both he and Solomon exercised priestly functions in offering sacrifice, or at least in directing the sacrifices, if they did not actually offer them (2 Sam. vi. 17, 18; 1 Kings viii. 62 ff.), and in blessing the people (2 Sam. vi. 18; 1 Kings viii. 14, 55); Solomon deposed and appointed a high-priest (1 Kings ii. 27, 35). David's sons, in whatever sense the term may have been used,

The Lord at thy right hand
Shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. 5
He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill *the places* 6
with the dead bodies;
He shall wound the heads over many countries.

were styled priests (2 Sam. viii. 18). But the priesthood of the king is here implicitly distinguished from the hereditary priesthood of the family of Aaron, as a priesthood 'after the manner of Melchizedek.'

For ever, as applied to an individual, may be a relative term, as in 1 Macc. xiv. 41, quoted above, p. 663. Cp. 1 Sam. i. 22. But the promise of an eternal priesthood corresponds rather to the promise of eternal dominion in 2 Sam. vii. 13, 16, 25, 29. Made to an individual, it is realised in his descendants. Jeremiah speaks of the priestly right of access to God which is to be conferred upon the Messianic prince (xxx. 21); and the union of civil and religious life was symbolised under the altered circumstances of the return from Babylon by the coronation of Joshua (Zech. vi. 12, 13).

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews dwells upon this verse in his exposition of the typical significance of the priesthood of Melchizedek, quoting it to illustrate the divine appointment of Christ to his high-priestly office, and the eternal duration and unique character of that office (Heb. v. 6; vi. 20; vii. 17, 21).

5—7. The scene changes to the battle-field. The king goes forth to war against his enemies. But he does not go in his own strength. Jehovah is at his right hand to fight his battles. In hot pursuit of his flying foes he halts but for a moment to refresh himself, and then presses on to his final triumph.

5. *The Lord*] *Adōnai*, i.e. Jehovah. The king is still addressed. Jehovah stands at his right hand as his champion in the battle. Cp. xvi. 8; cxxi. 5; cix. 31.

shall shatter *kings*] The verb is in the perfect tense, but the tenses in *vv.* 6, 7 shew that it is to be regarded, according to a common Hebrew idiom, as a 'prophetic' perfect. The victory is still future, but the Psalmist regards it as already won.

in the day of his wrath] The day of judgement upon the surrounding heathen nations, which is further described in *v.* 6. Cp. ii. 5, 12; xxi. 9; Job xx. 28; Is. xiii. 9, 13; Zeph. ii. 3.

6. *He shall judge among* the nations] The subject of the sentence must be Jehovah. Cp. vii. 8; ix. 8; lxxvi. 9. The nations are the enemies of *v.* 2. On them He will execute judgement, vindicating the cause of His king and people.

he shall fill (the battle-field) with corpses] This is on the whole the best rendering of an obscurely brief phrase. The tense is, as before, a prophetic perfect.

he shall shatter *the heads over many countries*] i.e. their rulers. But the usage of the phrase in lxviii. 21, Hab. iii. 13, points rather to the rendering, **he shall shatter the head** (of his enemies) **over** (all) **the**

7 He shall drink of the brook in the way:
Therefore shall he lift up the head.

wide earth. The earth is the battle-field whereon He deals deadly blows upon all His enemies. Delitzsch and others think that the last words may also be rendered *the land of Rabbah*, and may contain at least an allusive reference to David's conquest of the Ammonite capital (2 Sam. xii. 26 ff.).

7. The subject of this verse is not Jehovah, though the O.T. does not shrink from the boldest anthropomorphisms (e.g. lxxviii. 65; Is. lxiii. 1 ff.), but the king. The transition is abrupt, but as in the prophets we pass insensibly from the words of Jehovah to the words of the prophet, so here we pass from the action of Jehovah to the action of the king, who is His representative.

The poet presents him to our imagination in hot pursuit of the enemy. Though wearied with the toil of battle, he does not desist. He halts but for a moment to drink from the mountain torrent which he crosses. Refreshed and invigorated, he presses forward to complete his victory, till he is exalted in triumph over every foe.

lift **high** *the head*] i.e. be triumphantly victorious. Cp. iii. 3; xxvii. 6.

The martial language of the Psalm receives a natural explanation if its primary reference was to David, at a time when the nation of Israel had to fight for its existence against enemies on every side, rather than to the Messiah whom he expected. That such language should be imitated in the Psalms of Solomon (xvii. 23 ff.), in an age which looked for a conquering king as its Messianic ideal, is not to be wondered at. The passage is worth quoting for the sake of its contrast as well as its resemblance to this Psalm and Psalm ii.

"Behold, O Lord, and raise up for them their king, the son of David,
in the time which thou knowest, O God,
That he may reign over Israel thy servant;
And gird him with strength to break in pieces unrighteous rulers;
To cleanse Jerusalem from the heathen that trample it down and
destroy it,
In wisdom and in righteousness;
To thrust out sinners from the inheritance,
To break in pieces the arrogance of the sinners,
To shatter all their substance as a potter's vessels with a rod of iron.
To destroy the lawless nations with the word of his mouth,
That the nations may flee from him at his rebuke,
And to punish sinners in the imagination of their heart."

A translation of the Targum is subjoined. It will be noted that the Psalm is treated as referring to David.

Jehovah said by His word that He would make me lord of all Israel. But He said to me again, Wait for Saul who is of the tribe of Benjamin, until he die, for one kingdom approacheth not another [i.e. there cannot be two kings together], and afterwards I will make thine enemies thy footstool. [*Another Targum.* Jehovah said by His word, that He would

give me dominion, because I devoted myself to learn the law of His (v. l. my) right hand. Wait until I make thine enemy thy footstool.] The rod of thy strength shall Jehovah send forth from Zion, and thou shalt rule in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people of the house of Israel who devote themselves willingly to the study of the law, in the day of battle shalt thou be holpen with them: in splendours of holiness shall the mercies of God hasten unto thee like the descent of the dew: thy generations shall dwell securely. Jehovah hath sworn and will not repent, that thou shalt be appointed prince of the world to come for merit, because thou hast been an innocent king. The Shechinah of Jehovah at thy right hand hath stricken through kings in the day of His wrath. He is appointed judge over the peoples: he hath filled the earth with the bodies of the wicked who have been slain: he hath stricken through the heads of exceeding many kings over the earth. From the mouth of the prophet in the way shall he receive doctrine; therefore shall he exalt the head.

PSALM CXI.

Psalms cxi and cxii are closely connected in structure, contents, and language. Each consists of twenty-two lines, which begin with the letters of the alphabet in regular order, and are arranged in eight distichs and two tristichs. Ps. cxi celebrates the power, goodness, and righteousness of Jehovah; Ps. cxii describes the prosperity, beneficence, and righteousness of those who fear Him. Words and phrases applied to God in Ps. cxi are transferred in Ps. cxii with some modification of meaning, and sometimes with startling boldness, to the godly man, describing his character as the reflection of the character of Jehovah. Thus cxii. 1 *a* takes up the thought of cxi. 10 *a*: with cxii. 1 *b* (*delighteth*) cp. cxi. 2; cxii. 3 *b*, 9 *b* = cxi. 3 *b*: cxii. 4 *b* = cxi. 4 *b*: with cxii. 6 *b* cp. cxi. 4 *a*. The trustfulness of the godly man in cxii. 7, 8 answers to the trustworthiness of Jehovah in cxi. 7, 8. Other correspondences of thought and language may be noticed by the student.

Both Psalms draw largely from older Psalms and from Proverbs, and doubtless belong to the period after the exile, but to what part of it there is nothing to shew. Several MSS of the LXX, and the Vulgate, prefix to Ps. cxii the title, *For the Return of Haggai and Zechariah* (τῆς ἐπιστροφῆς Ἀγγαίου καὶ Ζαχαρίου): and the same title seems originally to have been prefixed to Ps. cxi in the LXX, though it is now found in the Syro-hexaplar version only.

Praise ye the LORD. 111

(א) I will praise the LORD with *my* whole heart,

(ב) In the assembly of the upright, and *in* the congregation.

1. *Praise ye the LORD*] Heb. *Hallelujah*. This liturgical call to praise forms no part of the structure of the Psalm. See note on civ. 35.

I will give thanks unto Jehovah with a whole heart,
In the council of the upright and in the congregation.

2 (ג) The works of the LORD *are* great,
(ד) Sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.
3 (ה) His work *is* honourable and glorious:
(ו) And his righteousness endureth for ever.
4 (ז) He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered:
(ח) The LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion.
5 (ט) He hath given meat unto them that fear him:

The word *sōd* denotes (1) the confidential intercourse of intimate friends, xxv. 14, &c., (2) a gathering or council of such persons (lxxxix. 7); and it has been thought by some that it is here contrasted with *the congregation*. Hence Coverdale (P.B.V.), *secretly among the faithful and in the congregation*. But the grammatical construction does not support the distinction. The congregation assembled for worship is termed *council* as being united by the sense of common fellowship, and its members are described as *the upright*, for it is presumed that they are actuated by true devotion. Cp. xxxiii. 1; i. 5.

2. The ground of praise. *The* **doings** *of Jehovah* of which the Psalmist is thinking are those which He has wrought for His people (*v.* 6), but for us they will include His works in Nature (civ. 13, 24, 31) as well as in history. They are **studied** or **to be studied** (Jer. *exquirenda*) with loving diligence **by all who delight** in learning to understand His revelation of Himself (i. 2; Neh. i. 11). Less probable are the renderings *in regard to all their desirableness* (Prov. viii. 11); or, *in regard to all their* (LXX *his*) *purposes*.

3. **His work is majesty and splendour,**
And his righteousness standeth fast for ever.

All His works are a revelation of those attributes of royal dignity with which He clothes Himself (civ. 1), and at the same time they are the outcome of His eternal righteousness. With Him there is no divorce between might and right. Similarly "His counsel standeth fast for ever" (xxxiii. 11).

4. *He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered*] Lit. *made a memorial for his wonderful works*, particularly the deliverance of His people from Egypt, by the continuous tradition which they were charged to hand on from one generation to another (lxxviii. 3; Ex. xii. 26; &c.), and by the festivals and ordinances which commemorated that deliverance, especially the Passover (Ex. xii. 14). But the words may also be rendered, *He hath made* (himself) *a memorial by his wonderful works*, won for Himself honour by them[1]. Cp. Neh. ix. 10, "So thou didst get thee a name"; Ex. xiv. 4, 17.

gracious and full of compassion] Cp. ciii. 8. Fundamental attributes of Jehovah (Ex. xxxiv. 6) illustrated in the Exodus, and in all His dealings with Israel (Neh. ix. 17, 31).

5. *meat*] As He made provision for Israel's wants in the wilderness by the manna, so He provides for the wants of His people at all times

[1] *Zēker*, 'memorial,' is nearly equivalent to 'name' (cxxxv. 13, and often).

(ו) He will ever be mindful of his covenant.
(כ) He hath shewed his people the power of his works, 6
(ל) That *he* may give them the heritage of the heathen.
(מ) The works of his hands *are* verity and judgment; 7
(נ) All his commandments *are* sure.
(ס) They stand fast for ever and ever, 8
(ע) *And are* done in truth and uprightness.
(פ) He sent redemption unto his people: 9

(Ps. xxxiv. 9, 10). *Ṭereph*, lit. *prey* of a lion, in later Heb. has the general sense of **food** (Prov. xxxi. 15; Mal. iii. 10). The unusual word is chosen here for the sake of the acrostic.

he will remember his covenant for ever] The deliverance from Egypt was a proof that Jehovah remembered His covenant with the patriarchs (Ex. ii. 24; vi. 5), and a pledge that He would never be unmindful of it. Cp. cv. 8, 10.

6. *that* he *may give them* &c.] R.V., **In giving them the heritage of the nations.** By dispossessing the Canaanites and giving Israel their land for its inheritance Jehovah most signally demonstrated His might (Deut. iv. 38 and often). That gift was the pledge of a still wider sovereignty, to be fulfilled only in a spiritual way (Ps. ii. 8; Is. lx. 14).

7. *verity and judgment*] **Truth and right.** Jehovah's actions are manifestations of His eternal attributes of truth and justice (Deut. xxxii. 4). He is constantly true to His promises, unfailingly just in His moral government of the world. The gift of Canaan to Israel was the fulfilment of His promise to the patriarchs, while the expulsion of its former inhabitants was a just retribution for their sins (Deut. ix. 4, 5).

his commandments] R.V. **his precepts**, the various special injunctions in which man's duties are set forth. These are sure, trustworthy, not mutable or arbitrary. By a natural transition the Psalmist passes from the mighty works which Jehovah has done for His people to the commandments which He has given them. The memories of Sinai naturally follow those of the Exodus. This verse is a reminiscence of xix. 7—9: cp. also *v.* 3 *b* with xix. 9 *a*. The word for *precepts* is peculiar to the Psalter: xix. 8; ciii. 18; **cxix** (21 times).

8. Stablished for ever and ever,
Made in truth and uprightness.

This verse further characterises Jehovah's precepts, and to suit his acrostic the poet uses the word *'ăsūyīm* in the sense of 'made,' 'enacted,' not in its common sense of 'done,' 'performed' (ciii. 18).

9, 10. A final summary of God's love and man's duty.

9. *He* **hath sent** *redemption*] The primary reference is to the deliverance from Egypt (Deut. vii. 8 and often), and the ratification of the covenant at Sinai: but the restoration from exile in Babylon had been a second and scarcely less notable act of redemption. By it Jehovah had given proof of His faithfulness to His covenant, which in

(צ) He hath commanded his covenant for ever:
(ק) Holy and reverend *is* his name.
10 (ר) The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom:
(ש) A good understanding have all they that do *his commandments:*
(ת) His praise endureth for ever.

the dark days of the Exile might have seemed abrogated for ever (Jer. xxxiii. 20 ff.; Is. xlix. 14).

holy and reverend is *his name*] **To be feared** (xcvi. 4); elsewhere rendered *fearful* (Deut. xxviii. 58) or *terrible* (Ps. xcix. 3). By these deliverances and acts of grace Jehovah has revealed Himself as a God Who is holy and must be feared (Ex. xv. 11; Is. xxix. 23; viii. 13).

10. *The fear of* **Jehovah** is *the beginning of wisdom*] The fundamental principle of the 'Wisdom' or religious philosophy of Israel (Prov. ix. 10; i. 7; Job xxviii. 28; Ecclesiasticus i. 20). The A.V. *reverend* in *v.* 9 obscures the close connexion between this verse and *v.* 9. Jehovah has revealed Himself as One Who is to be feared; to fear Him therefore is the starting point of all true wisdom; and Ps. cxii developes the thought of the happiness of the man whose life is governed by this principle. In connexion with the attribute *holy* in *v.* 9 *c* it may be noted that Prov. ix. 10 adds, "and the knowledge of the Holy One is discernment."

a good understanding] A.V. marg. *good success*, R.V. marg. *good repute*. The cognate verb often denotes success resulting from intelligence, and in Prov. iii. 4 the word approximates to the meaning *repute*, but it is best to retain the rendering *understanding*. Cp. Prov. xiii. 15.

that do his commandments] Heb. *that do them*; i.e. all that is implied in the fear of Jehovah. Insight is the reward of obedience. Cp. John vii. 17. R.V. restores Coverdale's *that do thereafter*.

his praise **standeth fast** *for ever*] All the attributes of Jehovah which demand man's praise are, like His righteousness (*v.* 3), eternal. Thus the Psalmist rounds off his song by returning to the thought with which he began it, and gives the reason for the *Hallelujah* prefixed to it.

PSALM CXII.

112 Praise ye the LORD.
(א) Blessed *is* the man *that* feareth the LORD,

1. **Happy** is *the man* that *feareth* **Jehovah**] This Psalm takes up and expands the last verse of the preceding Psalm. The secret and source of all true happiness and prosperity is the fear of Jehovah, which leads to a cheerful and thorough obedience to His commandments.

(ב) *That* delighteth greatly in his commandments.
(ג) His seed shall be mighty upon earth: 2
(ד) The generation of the upright shall be blessed.
(ה) Wealth and riches *shall be* in his house: 3
(ו) And his righteousness endureth for ever.
(ז) Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: 4
(ח) *He is* gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.

that *delighteth*] A reminiscence of i. 2. Cp. xl. 8; cxix. 35, 97. It is the same word as in cxi. 2.

2. *His seed* &c.] His posterity shall be powerful **in the land.** Cp. xxv. 13; xxxvii. 9, 11. *Gibbōr* generally means *valiant* in war, but is here used for the sake of the acrostic, in the wider sense of powerful by wealth and position.

the generation of the upright] Lit. *a generation of upright men*, the descendants of the man who fears Jehovah, parallel to and synonymous with *his seed.*

3. *Wealth* &c.] Cp. Prov. iii. 16; viii. 18.

his righteousness **standeth fast** *for ever*] Here and in *v.* 9 the words which are used in cxi. 3 of God are applied to the godly man. They may be understood to mean that the character of the godly man is a reflection of the character of God: but the parallelism suggests that here, as in xxiv. 5 (where *righteousness* answers to *blessing*), *righteousness* is nearly equivalent to the reward of righteousness (cp. Ezek. xviii. 20; Is. lviii. 8). The unbroken prosperity of the godly is the verdict of approval which God pronounces upon his character and conduct. Cp. Is. lxv. 23.

4. It is possible to understand this verse of Jehovah, *He ariseth as a light in the darkness to the upright, being gracious*, &c. But it seems clear from the general tenor of the Psalm that the epithets applied to God in cxi. 4 are here applied to the godly man. Cp. Matt. v. 48; Lk. vi. 36[1]. The verse may be rendered

There ariseth a light in the darkness for the upright,
(For him that is) gracious, compassionate, and righteous.

Cp. xcvii. 11; and the striking parallel in Is. lviii. 10, where the dawn of prosperity after the night of trouble is promised as the reward of merciful conduct. But 'the upright' is plural, while throughout the Psalm the godly man is spoken of in the singular (*v.* 2 is not an exception, for the plural there refers to his descendants), and the construction is harsh. It seems best therefore to render,

He ariseth as a light in the darkness for the upright,
Being gracious, compassionate, and righteous.

The 'upright' are the poor but godly whom he befriends in their need (*vv.* 5, 9), reflecting the attributes of God in his dealings with his fellow-men.

[1] The LXX here has ἐλεήμων καὶ οἰκτίρμων, the words used in Matt. v. 7, Lk. vi. 36: cp. Heb. ii. 17; James v. 11.

5 (ט) A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth:
(י) He will guide his affairs with discretion.
6 (כ) Surely he shall not be moved for ever:
(ל) The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.
7 (מ) He shall not be afraid of evil tidings:
(נ) His heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.
8 (ס) His heart *is* established, he shall not be afraid,
(ע) Until he see *his desire* upon his enemies.
9 (פ) He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor;
(צ) His righteousness endureth for ever;
(ק) His horn shall be exalted with honour.

5. *A good man sheweth favour*] **Well is it with the man that dealeth graciously.** The A.V. is ungrammatical, and misses the connexion with the preceding verse. Cp. xxxvii. 21, 26.

he will guide his affairs with discretion] Or, **who manages his affairs with rectitude** (Heb. *judgement*). So Symm., οἰκονομῶν τὰ πράγματα αὐτοῦ μετὰ κρίσεως. He takes care to injure no one in the conduct of his business. Cp. cxi. 7. R.V. and most commentators render, **he shall maintain his cause in judgement.** But the thought thus introduced is incongruous. Why should the just and liberal man be brought into court at all?

6. **For** (giving the reason for *Well is it* of *v.* 5) **he shall never be moved.** He will enjoy firm and unshaken prosperity. Cp. xv. 5; lv. 22; Prov. x. 30.

the righteous &c.] Cp. Prov. x. 7; Ecclus. xliv. 1—15. The line corresponds to cxi. 4*a*. As God has made Himself remembered by His marvellous works, so the godly man is held in remembrance for his acts of mercy.

7. Since he has a clear conscience and a quiet trust, he is not tortured by presentiments of evil, like the wicked man, Job xv. 20 ff.; Prov. x. 24.

fixed] i.e. steadfast, as lvii. 7.

8. *established*] Cp. cxi. 8; Is. xxvi. 3, where the word for *trusting* used in *v.* 7 also occurs.

until &c.] If he is attacked he is confident that in due time his cause, which is the cause of God and right, will triumph. Cp. xci. 8.

9. *He hath dispersed*] Of liberal, open-handed, distribution of wealth, in Prov. xi. 24.

his righteousness &c.] As in *v.* 3. "How little these words are contrary to the Christian consciousness is shewn by St Paul's citation of them in 2 Cor. ix. 9, where he applies them for the encouragement of Christian beneficence" (Delitzsch).

his horn &c.] Cp. 1 Sam. ii. 1; and see note on Ps. xcii. 10.

(ר) The wicked shall see *it*, and be grieved; 10
(ש) He shall gnash *with* his teeth, and melt away:
(ת) The desire of the wicked shall perish.

10. The wicked looks on in impotent rage and is consumed with vexation. While "the desire of the righteous is granted" (Prov. x. 24), his desire comes to nought. The end of the Psalm, like the beginning, is an echo of Ps. i.

PSALM CXIII.

Psalms cxiii—cxviii form the *Hallel*, or Hymn of Praise, which according to Jewish liturgical usage is sung at the three great Festivals of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, at the Festival of the Dedication, and at the New Moons (with the exception of the New Year). At the domestic celebration of the Passover, Pss. cxiii, cxiv are sung before the meal, Pss. cxv—cxviii after it, when the fourth cup has been filled. It was probably the hymn sung by our Lord and His disciples before they left the upper chamber (Matt. xxvi. 30; Mk. xiv. 26). This group of Psalms is also called the *Egyptian Hallel* (cxiv. 1).

The term *Great Hallel* is also used, but ancient Jewish authorities were not agreed as to its meaning. According to one view it denoted Ps. cxxxvi; according to another, Pss. cxx—cxxxvi; according to a third, Pss. cxxxv, cxxxvi. (Levy-Fleischer, *Neuhebr. Wörterbuch*, i. 473 *a*.)

The choice of three Psalms from the Hallel (cxiii, cxiv, cxviii) as the Proper Psalms for Evensong on Easter Day marks the connexion of the Christian Festival with the Jewish Festival which it succeeded.

This Psalm evidently belongs to the post-exilic period, and expresses the gratitude of Israel for its restoration from the Captivity. It is "a connecting link between the Song of Hannah and the Magnificat of the Virgin" (Bp Perowne).

It is a call to praise Jehovah, Who, though enthroned in majesty in heaven, condescends to care for the weak and lowly on the earth. It consists of three equal stanzas.

i. A call to the universal and unceasing praise of Jehovah (1—3).
ii. His exaltation and condescension (4—6).
iii. Instances of His condescension (7—9).

Praise ye the LORD. 113
Praise, O ye servants of the LORD,

1—3. A call to praise Jehovah's name universally and unendingly.

1. For the structure of the verse with repetition of the verb cp. xxix. 1. The same words recur in different order in cxxxv. 1.

O ye servants of the LORD] True Israelites, who as individuals answer to the calling of Israel to be "the servant of Jehovah" (cxxvi. 22; Is. xli. 8, 9; *al.*). Cp. lxix. 36; Is. liv. 17.

Praise the name of the LORD.
2 Blessed be the name of the LORD
From this time forth and for evermore.
3 From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same
The LORD'S name *is* to be praised.
4 The LORD *is* high above all nations,
And his glory above the heavens.
5 Who *is* like unto the LORD our God,
Who dwelleth on high,
6 Who humbleth *himself* to behold
The things that are in heaven, and in the earth?
7 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,
And lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;

the name of Jehovah, emphatically repeated thrice, is more significant than *Jehovah* simply would be. It is the compendious expression for His whole revelation of Himself, which is the object and ground of His servants' praise.

3. *From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same*] Throughout the world from east to west (l. 1). Cp. Mal. i. 11; Zeph. iii. 9.

4—6. The ground of praise, Jehovah's exaltation and condescension.

4 *a*. Cp. xcix. 2.
4 *b*. Cp. lvii. 5, 11; viii. 1.
5 *a*. Cp. Ex. xv. 11; Deut. iii. 24.
5 *b*, **6**. The structure of these lines—lit. *Who exalteth himself to sit, Who humbleth himself to see, in heaven and in earth*—makes it probable that *in heaven* and *in earth* belong to the two preceding lines respectively. Keble's paraphrase expresses it excellently,

> "Exalting still His holy place,
> Low bending still His eye of grace,
> In heaven above, in earth below."

The point is Jehovah's condescension. Though He sits enthroned on high in heaven, yet He stoops to regard the earth. He is not "careless of mankind," as heathen gods were often supposed to be. For the thought cp. cxxxviii. 6; Is. lvii. 15.

7—9. Examples of Jehovah's gracious condescension.

7, 8. The first three lines are taken from the Song of Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. 8, with only a slight variation of form in two words. "To sit in the dust" (Is. xlvii. 1), or "on the dunghill" (Lam. iv. 5) is an oriental metaphor for a condition of extreme degradation and misery. Cp. Job ii. 8. The dung and other rubbish of an Eastern town or village is collected outside it in a heap called the *Mezbele*. On this

That *he* may set *him* with princes, 8
Even with the princes of his people.
He maketh the barren *woman* to keep house, 9
To be a joyful mother of children.
Praise ye the LORD.

"the outcast who has been stricken with some loathsome malady and is not allowed to enter the dwellings of men, lays himself down, begging an alms of the passers-by by day, and by night sheltering himself among the ashes which the heat of the sun has warmed." Wetzstein in Delitzsch's *Comm. on Job*, p. 62, quoted in Prof. Davidson's *Comm. on Job*, in this Series, p. 14.

8. 'To dwell' or 'sit with princes' is a figure for elevation to the highest rank and dignity[1]. So Job xxxvi. 7, "[God] withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous: but with kings upon the throne he setteth them for ever, and they are exalted." Cp. 2 Sam. ix. 7.

9. He maketh the barren housewife to dwell
As a joyful mother of sons.

He gives her a secure and happy position in her home. The reference in *vv.* 6, 7 to the Song of Hannah suggests this further reference to the experience of Hannah, as an instance of the way in which Jehovah has compassion on those who are despised. But doubtless under the figure of the once childless wife gladdened with a family of sons the Psalmist intends to allude to Zion. Cp. Is. liv. 1; lxvi. 8. So the Targum: "Who maketh the congregation of Israel, which was like a barren woman mourning for the men of her household, to be full of crowds, like a mother who rejoiceth over sons."

Praise ye the LORD] In the LXX this Hallelujah is transferred, perhaps rightly, to the beginning of Ps. cxiv. See on civ. 35.

PSALM CXIV.

This exquisite little poem treats a familiar subject with consummate artistic skill and singular freshness and force. For perfection of form and dramatic vividness it is almost if not quite unrivalled in the Psalter. It consists of four stanzas of two verses each. In each stanza one dominant thought is presented in the fewest but most expressive words; and in each verse the law of parallelism (*Introd.* p. lxi) is strictly observed.

i. The Exodus from Egypt was the birthday of Israel as the people of Jehovah (1, 2).

ii. Miracles marked their progress. Natural obstacles voluntarily made way for them: the solid mountains trembled (3, 4).

[1] According to the Massoretic text the *Chireq compaginis* or binding vowel, which is characteristic of this Psalm (*vv.* 5, 6, 7, 9), is here attached to the infinitive. But it is almost certain that, with the LXX, להושיבו 'to set *him*,' should be read for להושיבי.

iii. And why? The past becomes present to the poet's mind, and he challenges Nature for the reason (5, 6).

iv. It was before its Lord and Master that earth trembled then. But instead of answering the question directly he answers it by implication, bidding earth tremble still as it trembled then before the Almighty God, Who can transform its most stubborn elements for the service of His people (7, 8).

The Psalm belongs to the period of the Return. The deliverance of Israel from Babylon was a second Exodus, a new birth of the nation. At such a time it was natural to dwell on the great memories of the past as an encouragement for the present and the future. It is a companion and sequel to Ps. cxiii, and may have been written by the same author[1]. Ps. cxiii celebrates Jehovah's condescending love in helping the afflicted: Ps. cxiv recalls the most signal instance of it in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. Both Psalms may have been composed for use at the Passover, and not merely adopted for such use.

Dante places this Psalm in the mouth of the spirits on their passage to Purgatory (*Purg.* c. ii. 46), interpreting it mystically of the exodus of the soul from the bondage of the flesh into the rest of God. Upon this interpretation also rests its use from the sixth century onward in the Western Church in the last offices for the dying and at the burial of the dead. It is most fitly appointed as a Proper Psalm for Easter Day, not only because it formed part of the Hallel, but because the deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egypt which it celebrates was typical of the greater deliverance from the bondage of sin, which was wrought through Christ's Resurrection.

The LXX, perhaps rightly, transfers the *Hallelujah* from the end of Ps. cxiii to the beginning of this Ps.

14 When Israel went out of Egypt,
The house of Jacob from a people of strange language;

1, 2. When Jehovah brought Israel out of Egypt He separated them from all other nations to be a holy people over which He Himself designed to rule.

1. *When Israel went* forth *out of Egypt*] LXX ἐν ἐξόδῳ Ἰσραὴλ ἐξ Αἰγύπτου, *In the exodus of Israel from Egypt*; Vulg. *In exitu Israel.*

a people of strange language] The Egyptian language was unintelligible to Israelites (Gen. xlii. 23). In the ancient world difference of language emphasised difference of race; and a stranger was presumably an enemy. The tyranny of oppressors seemed to be aggravated by the barrier which difference of language placed between them and their victims. Cp. Deut. xxviii. 49; Is. xxviii. 11; xxxiii. 19. The Greek word *barbăros* (used by the LXX here) which originally meant simply a foreigner as one who spoke unintelligibly came gradually to bear the modern sense of *barbarous*.

[1] The final *t* which is characteristic of Ps. cxiii appears in *v.* 8, together with a similar final *ð*.

Judah was his sanctuary,
And Israel his dominion. 2

The sea saw *it*, and fled:
Jordan was driven back. 3
The mountains skipped like rams,
And the little hills like lambs. 4

What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? 5

2. Judah became his sanctuary,
Israel his dominion (R.V.).

The division of the lines is rhythmical not logical. Israel became Jehovah's sanctuary and dominion. No contrast is intended between Judah and Israel, as though one was preeminent as the centre of religious life, the other as the chief civil power, but for the sake of the parallelism the whole nation is designated by its two principal divisions in later times as in 1 Kings iv. 20, and often. By His act of Redemption Jehovah consecrated it to be His dwelling place, and marked His choice of it as His kingdom. See the fundamental passage in Ex. xix. 3—6; and cp. Ex. xv. 13, 16; Deut. iv. 20; vii. 6 ff.; xxxii. 9 ff.; 1 Kings viii. 51; Hos. xiii. 4; Am. iii. 1, 2; Jer. ii. 2, 3: &c.

It is commonly noted as an indication of the poet's art that the simple pronoun *His* is used, and the name of God not introduced till *v.* 7, as though to excite the reader's curiosity. The suggestion is fanciful. "The whole of the preceding Psalm had been saying *who* the object of their praise was" (Kay); and the two Psalms were probably intended to be used liturgically together, as we know they actually were used. Moreover a *Hallelujah* preceded the Psalm as in the LXX, and supplied the antecedent for the pronoun.

3, 4. The wonders of the Exodus from Egypt and the Entry into Canaan.

3. The sea saw and fled;
The Jordan turned backwards.

In the parallel passages lxxvii. 16; Hab. iii. 10, *God* is the object of the verb *saw*. But here the object is significantly left unexpressed. The whole spectacle of Israel's triumphant Exodus is meant. The Red Sea and the Jordan are personified, and represented as hastening to withdraw the barriers they opposed to Israel's exit from Egypt and entrance into Canaan. Awestruck Nature recognised and obeyed its Master's Will.

4. A poetical description of the earthquake which accompanied the giving of the Law at Sinai (Ex. xix. 18; cp. Jud. v. 4; Ps. lxviii. 8). For the figure cp. xxix. 6.

5, 6. The past becomes present to the poet's mind, and he challenges Nature to explain its behaviour.

The A.V. misses the vividness of the Hebrew tenses. Render:

Thou Jordan, *that* thou wast driven back?
6 Ye mountains, *that* ye skipped like rams;
And ye little hills, like lambs?

7 Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord,
At the presence of the God of Jacob;
8 Which turned the rock *into* a standing water,
The flint into a fountain of waters.

What aileth thee, thou sea, that thou fleest?
Thou Jordan, that thou turnest back?
Ye mountains, that ye skip like rams?
Ye hills, like young sheep?

7, 8. It was at Jehovah's presence that earth trembled then; but instead of a formal answer the poet's words take a wider range, and he bids earth tremble still at the presence of its Lord, Who proves His sovereignty by transforming its most stubborn elements for the benefit of His people.

7. Cp. xcvii. 4, 5. *The Lord* (*Ādōn*) denotes Jehovah as the Ruler of the world. He it is and no other Who is the God of Jacob.

8. *Which turned* &c.] **Who turneth the rock into a pool of water.** The participle in the Heb. is independent of time. It denotes not merely a historic fact but an attribute expressed in the terms of historic fact. He Who made water flow from the rock in Rephidim and the cliff in Kadesh (Ex. xvii. 6; Num. xx. 8 ff.; cp. Ps. lxxviii. 15, 16, 20) can still provide streams of blessing for His people. The verse combines reminiscences of Is. xli. 18 ('pool of water,' 'fountain'), and Deut. viii. 15 ('flint'): cp. Ps. cvii. 35.

PSALM CXV.

i. In a time of national humiliation Israel supplicates Jehovah to vindicate the honour of His name by raising His people from their degradation. Why should the heathen be allowed to mock, when Israel knows Him to be supreme and omnipotent (1—3)?

ii. How utterly different is He from the speechless, powerless idols which the heathen make and call gods: gods which must drag down their worshippers to their own level of senselessness and impotence (4—8).

iii. Exhortations to trust Jehovah and await His blessing (9—13).

iv. Prayers for blessing and resolves to praise Jehovah (14—18).

This Psalm was probably composed for use in the Temple services after the Return from Babylon, perhaps when the first flush of enthusiasm had died away, and the little community in Jerusalem realised how contemptibly weak it was in the eyes of its neighbours (Ezra iii. 3; iv. 1 ff.), perhaps at a later period (Neh. iv. 1—5); but the sarcastic description of idols in *vv.* 4 ff. points rather to the earlier time, when

the memories of Babylonian idolatry were still fresh. Israel's sense of its own weakness adds strength to its faith in Jehovah, to Whom alone it can look for help and protection.

The precise manner in which the Psalm was intended to be sung cannot be determined with certainty. *Vv.* 1—8 may have been sung by the choir of Levites; *vv.* 9*a*, 10*a*, 11*a* by the precentor, answered in *vv.* 9*b*, 10*b*, 11*b* by the choir; and *vv.* 12—18 by the choir. But it is not improbable that *vv.* 12—15 at any rate were distributed between the two halves of the choir. An allusion to such antiphonal singing is found in Ezra iii. 11. The priests and Levites "sang one to another (lit. *answered*) in praising and giving thanks unto Jehovah." Cp. Neh. xii. 40.

The opening words of the Psalm, though properly a prayer, have commonly been used as a thanksgiving, as by Henry V after Agincourt[1]:

> "Do we all holy rites;
> Let there be sung 'Non nobis' and 'Te Deum.'"
> Shakespeare, *Henry V.*, iv. 8. 128.

In some Heb. MSS and in the LXX and versions dependent on or influenced by it (Vulg., Arab., Aeth., Syr., Theodotion, Jerome) this Psalm is united with Ps. cxiv. But in tone, structure, and style the two Psalms are quite distinct and cannot originally have been one.

Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, 11
But unto thy name give glory,
For thy mercy, *and* for thy truth's sake.

1—3. An appeal to God to vindicate His honour by succouring His people.

1. *Not unto us*] Strictly speaking, this is not a deprecation, but a protestation. 'Not for ourselves or for our own sake do we ask.' We have no merits of our own to plead; we do not ask for our own aggrandisement. *But unto thy name give glory*: work mightily on behalf of Thy people, and vindicate Thine honour, for if they are despised, Thy name is dishonoured. Cp. the similar plea in Dan. ix. 18, 19; and see Is. xlviii. 9, 11; Ezek. xx. 9, 14; xxxvi. 21—23.

for thy lovingkindness, and *for thy truth's sake*] If Jehovah does not interfere on behalf of His people, it must seem as though His fundamental attributes of love and faithfulness (Ex. xxxiv. 6), exemplified in His choice of Israel (Deut. vii. 7, 8), had vanished. Cp. lxxvii. 8, 9.

[1] "The king...gathering his armie togither, gaue thanks to almightie God for so happie a victorie; causing his prelats and chapleins to sing this psalme: 'In exitu Israel de Aegypto': and commanded euerie man to kneele downe on the ground at this verse: '*Non nobis*, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam.'" Holinshed, quoted by Verity, *Henry V*, p. 227. In the Vulg. Pss. cxiv and cxv are one Psalm; the first part would have been sung for the dead and dying (see above, p. 680), and the second part as a thanksgiving.

2 Wherefore should the heathen say,
Where *is* now their God?

3 But our God *is* in the heavens:
He hath done whatsoever he pleased.
4 Their idols *are* silver and gold,
The work of men's hands.
5 They have mouths, but they speak not:
Eyes have they, but they see not:
6 They have ears, but they hear not:
Noses have they, but they smell not:
7 They *have* hands, but they handle not:
Feet *have* they, but they walk not:
Neither speak they through their throat.
8 They that make them are like unto them;
So is every one that trusteth in them.

2. So lxxix. 10. Cp. xlii. 3, 10; Ex. xxxii. 12; Num. xiv. 13 ff.; Joel ii. 17; Mic. vii. 10. *Now* does not mean at the present time as contrasted with the past, but is a particle emphasising the question, *where, prithee?*

3. *But*] Or, *Whereas*. Though its outward circumstances may seem to give ground for the taunts of the heathen, Israel knows that its God is supremely exalted and omnipotent. If His people suffer, it is because He wills it, not because He lacks power to help them. He does whatsoever He wills in chastisement (Is. liii. 10) and in redemption (Is. lv. 11). Cp. Wisdom xii. 18, "Thou, being sovereign over thy strength, judgest in gentleness, and with great forbearance dost thou govern us; for the power is thine whensoever thou hast the will."

4—8. Do the heathen taunt us with the impotence of our God? What are their own gods? Nothing but their own handiwork, destitute of ordinary human senses, though represented with organs of sense. For similar sarcastic descriptions of idols and the contrast between them and the living God, see Is. xliv. 9—20; Jer. x. 1—16; Deut. iv. 28; Is. ii. 20; Hab. ii. 18, 19; Wisdom xv. 15. The passage recurs in Ps. cxxxv. 15—18. Observe how completely the Psalmist identifies the god with the image: it has no separate existence.

4. *Their idols*] i.e. the idols of the nations, as Ps. cxxxv. 15, and the LXX and Jerome here, read.

5, 6. They cannot teach their worshippers (Hab. ii. 19) or see their needs; they cannot hear prayers offered to them or smell the sweet savour of sacrifices. Jehovah, though He has no bodily form, can truly be said to speak (Is. i. 20) and see (Ps. cxiii. 6) and hear (Ps. vi. 8) and smell (Gen. viii. 21).

8. **Like unto them shall their makers become,**
Even everyone that trusteth in them.

O Israel, trust thou in the LORD:
He *is* their help and their shield.
O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD:
He *is* their help and their shield.
Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD:
He *is* their help and their shield.

Such gods drag down their worshippers to the same level of senseless stupidity: they must perish, for their protectors are powerless. Cp. 2 Kings xvii. 15; Is. xliv. 9, 10; Jer. ii. 5; Rom. i. 21—23.

9—13. An exhortation to Israel to trust Jehovah, Who will surely bless His people.

9. *Israel*] The LXX and Syr. have *house of Israel*, as in cxxxv. 19; hence the P.B.V.

he is *their help and their shield*] At first sight the transition to the third person seems awkward, and some of the Ancient Versions (LXX, Syr., Jer.) read the verb in the preceding line with different vowels in the third person, *The house of I. trusteth in the Lord*. But this is less forcible, and the change of person may be explained by supposing that the first line in each of these verses was sung by the precentor, and that this refrain was the answer of the choir.

help and shield as in xxxiii. 20; cp. Deut. xxxiii. 29; Ps. iii. 3; xxviii. 7.

The threefold division 'Israel,' 'house of Aaron,' 'fearers of Jehovah,' recurs in cxviii. 2—4: in cxxxv. 19 ff. 'the house of Levi' is added. Israel as a whole is first addressed, then the religious leaders of the people, then the inner circle of those who are truly God-fearing; or perhaps the Psalmist assumes the reality of their devotion and addresses people and priests together as 'fearers of Jehovah.' Many commentators however hold that by 'fearers of Jehovah' are meant Gentile proselytes (1 Kings viii. 41; Is. lvi. 6). In the N.T. God-fearing Gentiles, who had attached themselves more or less closely to the faith and worship of Israel, are designated as 'those who fear,' or 'reverence, God' (*οἱ φοβούμενοι τὸν Θεόν*, *οἱ σεβόμενοι τὸν Θεόν*, or *οἱ σεβόμενοι* simply: Acts xiii. 16, 26; xvi. 14; xviii. 7; xvii. 17). But the general usage of the O.T., and of the Psalter in particular, makes it improbable that the phrase 'fearers of Jehovah' has this sense here. In the closely parallel passage, xxii. 23, it certainly denotes Israelites, whether it be understood as synonymous with the 'seed of Israel' or as designating an inner circle of true believers. The question is discussed by Prof. A. B. Davidson in the *Expository Times*, 1892, pp. 491 ff., who comes to the conclusion that "any reference to a Gentile element in the Palestinian community is wholly without probability." It seems evident from the words "both small and great" of *v.* 13 that it is not "some small section like Gentile proselytes" that is meant: and "the intensely national and even local spirit" of this and kindred Psalms (*v.* 14; cxxxv. 21) forbids us to suppose that the Psalmist intended to include all who in every place acknowledged Jehovah.

12 The LORD hath been mindful of us: he will bless *us;*
He will bless the house of Israel;
He will bless the house of Aaron.
13 He will bless them that fear the LORD,
Both small and great.
14 The LORD shall increase you more and more,
You and your children.
15 You *are* blessed of the LORD
Which made heaven and earth.

16 The heaven, *even* the heavens, *are* the LORD'S:
But the earth hath he given to the children of men.
17 The dead praise not the LORD,
Neither any that go down into silence.

12. **Jehovah who hath remembered us will bless (us)**] By bringing them back from Babylon Jehovah proved that He had not forgotten His people (Is. xlix. 14, 15; Ps. xcviii. 3; cxxxvi. 23), and the Psalmist points to this deliverance as a pledge that He will still further bless them.

13. both *small and great*] One and all without distinction of rank or condition. Cp. Jer. vi. 13; xvi. 6; xxxi. 34.

14—18. Prayers for blessing and resolves to employ life in Jehovah's praise.

14. *The* LORD *shall increase you*] **Jehovah increase you**, add to your numbers (Deut. i. 11), a specially appropriate prayer for the little community of the returned exiles.

15. The prayer is still continued, **Blessed be ye of Jehovah.** The designation **Maker of heaven and earth** is characteristic of the later Psalms (cxxi. 2; cxxiv. 8; cxxxiv. 3; cxlvi. 6). It contrasts Jehovah the omnipotent Creator with the powerless idols of the heathen (Jer. x. 11; and often in Is. xl—lxvi). Here it also implies that He has the power to dispense the blessings of earth. Cp. also Is. xxxvii. 16; Ps. xcvi. 5; Neh. ix. 6.

16. The closing words of *v.* 15 are developed. **The heaven is Jehovah's heaven**; He has made it for His own dwelling-place (*v.* 3; ii. 4); He is "the God of heaven" (cxxxvi. 26; and often in the Aramaic of Ezra and Daniel). The LXX renders ungrammatically, 'the heaven of heaven' (Vulg. *caelum caeli*); hence P.B.V. 'all the whole heavens.'

the earth &c.] Cp. Is. xlv. 18.

17. From heaven the poet passes to earth, and from earth to Sheol, which here, as in xciv. 17, is termed '*silence.*' The dead raise no Hallelujahs; they are cut off from communion with God and from the power of rendering Him service of lip and life. For this gloomy view of the state of the dead cp. vi. 5; xxx. 9; lxxxviii. 4, 5, 10—12; Is. xxxviii.

But we will bless the LORD
From this time forth and for evermore.
Praise the LORD. 18

11, 18; and many passages in Job, e.g. vii. 9; x. 21 ff.; xiv: and see *Introd.* pp. xciii ff.

The verse is partly a stimulus to employ life rightly; partly (in effect) a plea, for if Jehovah suffers his people to perish, He will lose their praises.

18. But we (emphatic), **we the living** (as the LXX adds), **will bless Jah.** Cp. cxviii. 17; Is. xxxviii. 18 ff.

for evermore] In the spirit of faith the congregation sees no limit to the continuance of its existence or to its tribute of praise. What in the O.T. is a national hope becomes in the N.T. a personal hope.

The LXX and Jer. transfer the concluding *Hallelujah* to the beginning of Ps. cxvi.

PSALM CXVI.

i. 1. Answered prayer evokes love and lifelong praise (1—4).

2. Jehovah has proved Himself true to His revealed character by His gracious dealings with the Psalmist, who can now look forward to a prolonged life of tranquil service (5—9).

ii. 1. In his sorest trouble he had not lost faith, and now he will give thanks for Jehovah's mercy (10—14).

2. Jehovah's care for His beloved ones, illustrated by his recent experience, shall be gratefully acknowledged by the public performance of his vows and eucharistic sacrifices in the Temple (15—19).

The Psalm thus falls into two main divisions, each with two subdivisions. The LXX, followed by the Vulg., divides the Psalm into two, and according to their numeration *vv.* 1—9 form Ps. cxiv; *vv.* 10—19 form Ps. cxv. The separation of the Ps. into two is doubtless wrong, but it recognises that a fresh division begins at *v.* 10. 'I believed' corresponds to 'I love' in *v.* 1.

Ps. cxv is a congregational prayer; Ps. cxvi is an individual thanksgiving for deliverance from imminent danger of death. The language is general, and the precise nature of the danger does not appear: most likely it was sickness. In many points the Psalm reminds us of Hezekiah's thanksgiving (Is. xxxviii). But whatever it was, the danger had been extreme, and the thanksgiving is correspondingly earnest. The Psalmist was familiar with older Psalms, and freely adapts language from them (especially Pss. xviii, xxvii, xxxi, lvi) but gives it fresh force from the depths of his own recent experience.

The strong Aramaic colouring of the language[1], together with this free use of earlier Psalms, points to a late, possibly a very late, date.

[1] For the form of suffix in *v.* 7 cp. ciii. 3 ff. That in *v.* 12 is the regular Aramaic form. See Ges.-Kautzsch, *Gramm.* § 91, 2. R. 2.

It is however hardly probable that the Hasidaeans of the Maccabaean period (1 Macc. vii. 13 ff.) are meant by the 'saints' (*chasīdīm*) of *v.* 15.

Part of this Psalm is used in the office for the Thanksgiving of Women after Child-birth.

116 I love the LORD, because he hath heard
My voice *and* my supplications.
2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me,
Therefore will I call upon *him* as long as I live.
3 The sorrows of death compassed me,
And the pains of hell gat hold upon me:
I found trouble and sorrow.
4 Then called I upon the name of the LORD;
O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.

1, 2. Answered prayer demands lifelong love and gratitude.

1. Lit. *I love, because Jehovah heareth my voice, even my supplications*: an unusual, but not impossible, form of expression for *I love Jehovah, because he heareth* &c. Cp. 1 John iv. 19 (R.V.), "We love, because he first loved us." Again in *v.* 2 (*I will call*), and *v.* 10 (*I believed*) the Psalmist employs verbs in a peculiar manner without an expressed object.

I love is a reminiscence of Ps. xviii. 1, though the Heb. word there is different. *My voice, (even) my supplications* is (if the text is sound) a slight variation from the usual phrase *the voice of my supplications* (xxviii. 2, 6; xxxi. 22; cxxx. 2; cxl. 6).

The P.B.V. *I am well pleased that the Lord* &c. is linguistically questionable and less forcible.

2. *Because...therefore*] Better **For...and.**

inclined his ear] Ps. xvii. 6 and often.

as long as I live] Lit. *in my days* (Is. xxxix. 8). Cp. Ps. lxiii. 4, *in my life.*

3, 4. The Psalmist's prayer in peril. Cp. xviii. 4—6.

3. The cords of death encompassed me,
And the straitnesses of Sheol gat hold of [lit. *found*] **me.**

The parallelism decides for the meaning *cords* in xviii. 5, though *pangs* (LXX ὠδῖνες) is also a possible rendering, and may be the meaning here. But here too Death and Sheol are probably represented as hunters lying in wait for their prey with nooses and nets, or driving it into a defile from which it cannot escape. Cp. Lam. i. 3.

The P.B.V. renders wrongly *I shall find...I will call.* The crisis is evidently past.

4. the name of Jehovah, more emphatically than *Jehovah* alone, denotes His revealed character (Ex. xxxiv. 5), to which the Psalmist appealed, and not in vain.

Gracious *is* the LORD, and righteous;
Yea, our God *is* merciful.
The LORD preserveth the simple:
I was brought low, and he helped me.
Return unto thy rest, O my soul;
For the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.
For thou hast delivered my soul from death,
Mine eyes from tears,
And my feet from falling.
I will walk before the LORD
In the land of the living.
I believed, therefore have I spoken:
I was greatly afflicted:

5, 6. The character of Jehovah, realised in the Psalmist's experience.

5. Cp. cxi. 4, and passages referred to there, all based on the fundamental passage, Ex. xxxiv. 6.

6. *the simple*] Those whose want of wisdom and experience exposes them to danger. Cp. xix. 7; cxix. 130. LXX τὰ νήπια, *babes*; cp. Matt. xi. 25.

I was brought low] Cp. lxxix. 8; cxlii. 6.

and he helped me] R.V. saved. Cp. *v.* 13.

7—9. The Psalmist encourages himself with the recollection of God's mercy.

7. *Return unto thy rest, O my soul*] Abandon anxiety and resume the perfect tranquility that springs from trust in God. The plural form of the word for *rest* denotes full and complete rest. For the address to the soul cp. xlii. 5, and ciii. 1 ff., a Psalm further connected with this Psalm by its use of Aramaic forms of pronominal suffix.

dealt bountifully] Cp. xiii. 6.

8, 9. Taken almost verbatim from lvi. 13 (hence the transition to the second person), with the change of *light* to *lands*, suggested by xxvii. 13. The free and joyous service of God in the land of life and light is the contrast to that paralysis of existence in Sheol which he had dreaded. Cp. Is. xxxviii. 3, 11.

10—14. Faith's triumph must be followed by grateful thanksgiving.

10, 11. In the extremity of his distress the Psalmist was compelled to recognise the delusiveness of human help, but he never lost faith in God. Such is the general sense, but the details of interpretation are doubtful. The A.V. *I believed, therefore have I spoken* follows the LXX (ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα), which is quoted by St Paul in 2 Cor. iv. 13; but this rendering must be abandoned as grammatically untenable. On the whole it seems best to render:

I believed [or as R.V. **I believe**], **for I will speak:**
I was exceedingly afflicted:

11 I said in my haste,
All men *are* liars.

12 What shall I render unto the LORD
For all his benefits towards me?
13 I will take the cup of salvation,
And call upon the name of the LORD.
14 I will pay my vows unto the LORD
Now in the presence of all his people.

I said in my alarm,
All men are deceitful.

I believed may be understood absolutely, 'I held fast to my faith in Jehovah': but the Psalmist evidently (cp. *v.* 9) still has in mind Ps. xxvii. 13 "I believe that I shall see the goodness of Jehovah in the land of the living," and the use of the word there suggests that the sense here should be completed from *v.* 9, "I believed that it would be so," viz. 'that I should walk before Jehovah in the lands of the living.' This faith he retained though he was grievously afflicted. Further, **I said in my alarm** is borrowed from xxxi. 22, where the Psalmist confesses that in his peril he fancied himself deserted by Jehovah. 'I said in my alarm, I am cut off from before thine eyes.' Is not our Psalmist tacitly contrasting his own faith with that earlier Psalmist's loss of faith? *He* had not ceased to trust in God, but he had learned not to depend on men.

Other renderings are, (1) *I believed, when I spake* [saying] '*I am exceedingly afflicted*': i.e. I retained my confidence, even when I complained of the severity of my sufferings, and found myself deserted by men. Or (2) *I was confident that I should speak* (*thus*)*; but as for me, I was sore afflicted*: i.e. "he was fully confident that he would sooner or later have to record thanksgivings for deliverance, such as in *vv.* 5—9" (Cheyne).

all men are *liars*] Cp. lx. 11; lxii. 9; Rom. iii. 4.

12. 'Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quae retribuit mihi?' was the question which Richard of Bury, bishop of Durham 1334—1345, the most learned man of his country and age, asked himself repeatedly, and answered by making provision for a band of poor scholars to serve God and His Church. See Lightfoot's *Leaders of the Northern Church*, p. 105.

13. *the cup of salvation*] Lit. *salvations*; the cup to be drunk as a part of the sacrifice of thanksgiving (*v.* 14) for great and manifold deliverance. Cp. 'the cup of blessing' in the service of the Passover (Matt. xxvi. 27).

call upon] Rather, **proclaim** the name of Jehovah, acknowledging that to Him alone is my gratitude due.

14. This verse which is repeated as *v.* 18 is omitted in the best MSS of the LXX, and may have been inserted here by mistake. Its omission would make the stanza *vv.* 10—13 agree in length with the corresponding stanza *vv.* 1—4; still, the repeated resolution of thanksgiving is not out of place.

Precious in the sight of the LORD
Is the death of his saints.
Oh LORD, truly I *am* thy servant;
I *am* thy servant, *and* the son of thy handmaid:
Thou hast loosed my bonds.
I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving,
And will call upon the name of the LORD.
I will pay my vows unto the LORD
Now in the presence of all his people,
In the courts of the LORD's house,
In the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.
Praise ye the LORD.

15—19. Jehovah's care for His beloved ones has been illustrated in the Psalmist's experience, and for these mercies he will give public thanks in the Temple.

15. *Precious* &c.] Their death is not a matter of indifference to Him. Cp. lxxii. 14. Babylas bishop of Antioch, who was martyred in the Decian persecution, met his death singing these words.

his saints] **His beloved,** or **his godly ones.** See Appendix, Note I.

16. Lit. *I beseech thee, Jehovah, for I am thy servant.* The precative interjection would naturally be followed by an imperative, as in *v.* 4*b*, *hear me*, or the like; but the Psalmist breaks off into thanksgiving.

thy servant, [omit *and*] *the son of thy handmaid*] So lxxxvi. 16. 'The son of thy handmaid' is a synonym for 'thy servant,' but denoting a closer relationship, for servants 'born in the house' (Gen. xiv. 14) were the most trusted dependents. Cp. 'of the household of God,' Eph. ii. 19. It is hardly, as Delitzsch thinks, an allusion to the piety of the Psalmist's mother.

loosed my bonds] He had been like a prisoner condemned to death, *v.* 3. Cp. cvii. 10, 14.

17. Unto thee will I offer...and proclaim the name of Jehovah, as *v.* 13.

sacrifice of thanksgiving] See Lev. vii. 11 ff.

18. As in xxii. 25 stress is laid upon the *public* confession of gratitude. Cp. lxvi. 13.

19. *Praise ye the LORD*] **Hallelujah,** probably, with LXX, to be transferred to the beginning of Ps. cxvii.

PSALM CXVII.

The shortest of the Psalms is one of the grandest. Its invitation to all nations to join in praising Jehovah for His goodness to Israel is virtually a recognition that the ultimate object of Israel's calling was the salvation of the world. Cp. Ps. lxvii; xxii. 27; lxxxvi. 9. It is in

the truest sense a Messianic Psalm, and it is quoted by St Paul in Rom. xv. 11 as one of the Scriptures which foretold the extension of God's mercy to the Gentiles in Christ.

The occasion of the Psalm may have been the restoration of Israel from exile (cp. xcviii. 2, 3), or some subsequent special proof of God's goodness towards His people.

Owing to its brevity it is joined to the preceding or the following Psalm in many MSS; but it is not suitable either as the conclusion of the one, or as the beginning of the other.

117 O praise the LORD, all ye nations:
Praise him, all ye people.
2 For his merciful kindness is great toward us:
And the truth of the LORD *endureth* for ever.
Praise ye the LORD.

1. Praise Jehovah, all ye nations,
Laud him all ye peoples.

Two different words for *praise* are used.

2. For mighty hath been his lovingkindness toward us] Mighty as Israel's transgressions have been (lxv. 3), God's mercy has been mightier (ciii. 11, 12; cp. Rom. v. 20; 1 Tim. i. 14). Lovingkindness and truth are fundamental attributes of Jehovah's character (cxv. 1, and often). St Paul unites them in the proposition in support of which he quotes *v.* 1. "I say that Christ hath been made a minister of the circumcision for the *truth* of God, that he might confirm the promises given unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his *mercy*" (Rom. xv. 8, 9).

PSALM CXVIII.

In this, the last of the Hallel Psalms, the spirit of jubilant thanksgiving finds fullest utterance. The speaker is Israel, or a representative of Israel, who speaks in the name of the nation (*vv.* 10 ff.). As of old upon the shores of the Red Sea the people gave thanks as one man for their miraculous deliverance, so now they give thanks once more. As upon that occasion the dominant motive of their song was the realisation that to Jehovah alone they owed their deliverance, so now it is again (*vv.* 14, 23). Now as of old they feel that this deliverance is nothing less than a miracle; and the conviction has given them a fresh sense of the solidarity and continuity of their national life, and of the greatness of Israel's destiny in the counsels of Jehovah (*vv.* 17, 22).

All Israel, priests and people alike, are bidden to join in praising Jehovah for His lovingkindness (1—4). It is He alone Who is the Deliverer and Strength of His people (5—9). The nations round about have plotted to destroy Israel, but in vain; once more as of old Jehovah has proved Himself their Saviour (10—14), and glad thanksgivings celebrate the renewal of the national life (15—18). The solemn pro-

cession of worshippers approaches the Temple gates proclaiming the greatness of the miracle which Jehovah has wrought for them (19—24). With Hosannas and benedictions and thanksgivings the service is consummated in the Temple courts (25—29).

The Psalm was evidently intended to be sung by the procession of worshippers on their way to the Temple upon some special occasion of national rejoicing. Doubtless it was sung antiphonally, in the manner described in Ezra iii. 11, choir answering choir: but the precise distribution of the parts between the different choirs or voices cannot be determined with certainty. *Vv.* 1—4 however may have been sung as the procession started, the first line of each verse by the leader or a part of the choir, the refrain by the full chorus, and *vv.* 5—18 on the way to the Temple in a similar manner, the refrains at any rate being taken up by the full chorus. *V.* 19 is obviously the challenge of the procession as it approaches the Temple, and *v.* 20 the response of the priests from within. *Vv.* 21—25 may have been sung as the procession entered the Temple courts; *v.* 26 is the blessing with which the priests greet it; and *vv.* 27—29 may perhaps best be assigned to the procession and its leader.

It is generally agreed that the Psalm belongs to the post-exilic period, and that it must have been composed for some special and notable occasion. This occasion cannot have been the Feast of Tabernacles in the first year of the Return (Ezra iii. 1—4) or the laying of the foundation stone of the Temple in the following year (Ezra iii. 8 ff.); for *vv.* 19, 20 presume the existence of the Temple. Rather we might think of the Dedication of the Temple in B.C. 516, or the Passover which followed it (Ezra vi. 15 ff.). But the most probable view is that which connects the Psalm with the great celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles recorded in Neh. viii. In spite of the sneers of Sanballat and Tobiah, and the active hostility of the neighbouring tribes, the repair of the walls of Jerusalem had been successfully completed. The work was finished on the 25th day of the month Elul in the 21st year of Artaxerxes (B.C. 444). Nehemiah concludes his narrative with the words; "And it came to pass, when all our enemies heard thereof, that all the nations that were about us feared, and were much cast down in their own eyes; and they perceived that this work was wrought of our God" (vi. 16). In the following month (Tisri) the Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated with exceptional rejoicings. "There was exceeding great gladness" (Neh. viii. 14—18). The triumphant joyousness of the Psalm, its thanksgivings for recent deliverance from the hostility of surrounding enemies, its vivid consciousness that this deliverance is due to Jehovah's help alone, correspond strikingly to the circumstances and feelings of that time, as they are delineated in the Book of Nehemiah.

The very words of *v.* 25 of the Psalm occur in the prayer of Nehemiah (i. 11) and nowhere else, and several other striking resemblances of thought and language between the Psalm and the Book of Nehemiah will be noticed. The metaphor from building (*v.* 22) would naturally have been suggested by the recent building of the walls. And lastly, the connexion of the Psalm with the Feast of Tabernacles is corroborated by the historical use of the Psalm at that Festival. "In the time

of the Second Temple *v.* 25 formed the festal cry with which the altar of burnt offering was compassed in solemn procession, once on each of the first six days of the Feast of Tabernacles, and seven times on the seventh day. This seventh day was called 'the Great Hosanna' (*Hosanna Rabba*); and not only the prayers of the Feast of Tabernacles, but even the branches of willow and myrtle bound up with the palm-branch (*Lulab*) were called *Hosannas*" (Delitzsch). Baethgen does not speak too strongly when he says, "I believe it may be said with confidence that Ps. cxviii was sung for the first time at the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles in the year B.C. 444."

Cheyne thinks that "the exuberant spirit of independence and martial ardour in the Psalm" points to the purification and reconsecration of the Temple by Judas the Maccabee in B.C. 165 (1 Macc. iv. 37—59; 2 Macc. x. 1—7). Venema, followed by Rosenmüller, assigns it to the time when Simon drove the Syrians out of the Acra, and celebrated the triumph with signal rejoicings (1 Macc. xiii. 51; xiv. 4 ff.). But the Psalm breathes a freer spirit than might have been expected at the time when the Temple was still dominated by the Syrian garrison in the Acra; and the profession of *vv.* 8, 9 is hardly consistent with the eagerness of the Jews for alliance with Rome and Sparta.

The Psalm was Luther's favourite Psalm. "Though the whole Psalter," he wrote, "and all Holy Scripture is dear to me, as my only comfort in life, this Psalm has been of special service to me. It has helped me out of many great troubles, when neither Emperor nor kings nor wise men nor saints could help" (Tholuck).

It is appointed as one of the Proper Psalms for Easter Day, partly doubtless because it formed part of the Hallel sung at the Passover, but still more because of the reference of *v.* 22 to Christ, and the obvious appropriateness of much of its language, especially *vv.* 23, 24, to the triumph of the Resurrection.

118 O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good:
Because his mercy *endureth* for ever.
2 Let Israel now say,
That his mercy *endureth* for ever.
3 Let the house of Aaron now say,
That his mercy *endureth* for ever.

1—4. An introductory call to all Israel to join in praising Jehovah for His unfailing goodness.

1. As cvi. 1 (see notes); cvii. 1; Ezra iii. 11.

because his mercy &c.] **For his lovingkindness** &c.

2 ff. For the threefold division 'Israel,' 'house of Aaron,' 'fearers of Jehovah,' cp. cxv. 9—13, and notes there.

Israel] The LXX as in cxv. 9 reads *the house of Israel*, and adds after *say*, in *vv.* 2, 3, 4, *that he is good.* Hence P.B.V. with the Vulg. in *v.* 2, 'Let Israel now confess, *that he is gracious.*'

Let them now that fear the LORD say, 4
That his mercy *endureth* for ever.

I called upon the LORD in distress: 5
The LORD answered me, *and set me* in a large place.
The LORD *is* on my side; I will not fear: 6
What can man do unto me?
The LORD taketh my part with them that help me: 7
Therefore shall I see *my desire* upon them that hate me.
It is better to trust in the LORD 8
Than to put confidence in man.
It is better to trust in the LORD 9
Than to put confidence in princes.
All nations compassed me about: 10

5—9. Israel speaks as one man; acknowledging that it is Jehovah Who has delivered them. With Him as their ally they have nothing to fear.

5. **Out of the straitness in which I was I called upon Jah: Jah answered me (and set me) in a wide place.**

Israel had been hemmed in and harassed by enemies (Neh. iv. 7 ff.): they prayed (Neh. iv. 9), and were set free to move and act without let or hindrance. Cp. xviii. 19; xxxi. 8. The name *Jah* is perhaps chosen here and in *vv.* 14, 17, 18, 19, in order to recall the memories of the Exodus. See *v.* 14[1].

6. From lvi. 9, 11. Cited in Heb. xiii. 6.

7. **Jehovah is on my side as my helper**] Cp. liv. 4. The expression is an idiomatic one. It denotes not merely *among my helpers*, as one among many, but 'in the character or capacity of my helpers,' 'as a host of helpers.' "He sums up in Himself the qualities of a class, viz. the class of helpers" (Cheyne).

therefore shall I see &c.] Or, do I see, a general truth. Cp. liv. 7 *b*, and note; lix. 10; xcii. 11.

8, 9. **It is good to take refuge in Jehovah, and not to put trust in man...in princes**] Cp. cxlvi. 3; cxvi. 11; lxii; and for the construction, see note on lii. 3. Artaxerxes had given Nehemiah letters to the Persian governors, and an escort of cavalry (Neh. ii. 7—9), but these did not prevent the hostility of Tobiah and Sanballat. Repeatedly Nehemiah ascribes the frustration of their plots to the direct interposition of God.

10—14. It was in the strength of Jehovah that Israel was enabled to repel the persistent attacks of its enemies.

10. *All nations* &c.] Comp. "all the nations that were about us,"

1 The A.V. and R.V. follow the Eastern or Babylonian reading in repeating *Jah* in the second line. The Massora, according to the Western or Palestinian recension, makes the syllable *jah* simply the termination of the preceding word.

But in the name of the LORD will I destroy them.
11 They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about:
But in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.
12 They compassed me about like bees;
They are quenched as the fire of thorns:
For in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.
13 Thou hast thrust sore at me that *I* might fall:
But the LORD helped me.
14 The LORD *is* my strength and song,
And is become my salvation.
15 The voice of rejoicing and salvation *is* in the tabernacles of the righteous:

Neh. vi. 16. Arabians, Ammonites, and Philistines of Ashdod, are specially mentioned in Neh. iv. 7 f. Cp. also Ezra iv. 7—23, referring probably to an earlier period in the reign of Artaxerxes.

but in the name &c.] In the name of Jehovah, trusting that He would prove Himself all that He has promised, I did cut them off. The exact meaning of the verb is uncertain. The tense is a 'graphic imperfect.' From *vv.* 5, 13 it is clear that the crisis was past and the victory won.

12. *like bees*] Cp. Deut. i. 44.

they were extinguished *as a fire of thorns*] The sudden collapse of their rage is compared to a fire of thorns which blazes up fiercely and then rapidly dies down. But the form of the preceding verses and the following line lead us to expect a climax in the description of their hostility rather than a description of their extinction, and the LXX may have preserved the true text:

> They came about me like bees about wax;
> They blazed like a fire among thorns;
> In the name of Jehovah, I cut them off.

The corruption of the Massoretic text is most ingeniously explained by Baethgen. The Targ. 'burning like a fire among thorns,' seems to preserve a reminiscence of this reading. Aq. Symm. Jer. Syr. follow the Mass. text.

13. *Thou* didst *thrust sore at me*] The community as an individual addresses its enemies as an individual. Israel and the foe are as it were two warriors matched in single combat. Cp. Micah vii. 8.

14. The words, taken from the Song of Moses (Ex. xv. 2; cp. Is. xii. 2) recall the memory of Israel's greatest deliverance, and imply that He Who brought them out of Egypt is still their Deliverer.

15—18. The rejoicings of the festival in gratitude to Jehovah for preserving the nation's life.

15. *tabernacles*] Tents, i.e. dwellings (xci. 10), unless the reference be to the tents of pilgrims to the feast pitched outside Jerusalem. The rendering 'tabernacles' might seem to connect the Psalm with the Feast

The right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.
The right hand of the LORD is exalted: 16
The right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.
I shall not die, but live, 17
And declare the works of the LORD.
The LORD hath chastened me sore: 18
But he hath not given me over unto death.
Open to me the gates of righteousness: 19
I will go into them, *and* I will praise the LORD:
This gate of the LORD, 20
Into which the righteous shall enter.
I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, 21
And art become my salvation.

of Tabernacles, but the word for the 'booths' used on that occasion is a different one. *The righteous* are Israel, regarded in the light of their calling, and contrasted with 'the wicked,' the heathen who sought to frustrate God's purpose by destroying them. Cp. xxxiii. 1; Hab. i. 13. *Vv.* 15 *b*, 16 are the joyous shout of the righteous, and are based on Ex. xv. 6, 12.

17, 18. Israel is the speaker. In its renewed national life it recognises the gift of Jehovah which is to be employed in praising Him (Is. xliii. 21). Its sufferings have been for chastening; God cannot permit His people to perish (Jer. xxx. 11=xlvi. 28; Hab. i. 12). The LORD =Jah in these verses.

19—24. The procession has reached the Temple gates, and seeks to enter (19). A voice from within reminds them of the condition of entry (20); and passing into the Temple courts the grateful people renew their praises for the miracle of deliverance which has been wrought for them (21—24).

19. The language is robbed of its proper force if it is regarded merely as a general expression of a desire to worship in the Temple, and not rather as a call to the priests within to open the gates for the approaching procession. Cp. xxiv. 7 ff. The gates of the Temple are called "gates of righteousness" because it is the abode of the righteous God (cp. Jer. xxxi. 23), from whence (cp. Ps. xx. 2) He manifests His righteousness in the salvation of His people. See note on lxv. 5.

I will go &c.] **I will enter into them, I will give thanks to Jah.**

20. **This is the gate that belongs to Jehovah;**
The righteous may enter into it.

The emphasis is on *righteous*. Those who would enter must be righteous like Him Who dwells there. Cp. xv. 1 ff.; xxiv. 3 ff.; Is. xxvi. 2.

21. **I will give thanks unto thee, for thou hast answered me** (R.V.).

and art become my salvation] Another allusion to Ex. xv. 2.

22 The stone *which* the builders refused
Is become the head *stone* of the corner.
23 This is the LORD'S doing;
It is marvellous in our eyes.
24 This *is* the day *which* the LORD hath made;
We will rejoice and be glad in it.
25 Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD:

22. The stone which the builders rejected
Is become the head of the corner.

A metaphor from building. The 'corner-stone' bonding the walls together was a most important part of the structure. A large and strong stone was needed for the purpose. It is mentioned along with the foundation (Jer. li. 26; Job xxxviii. 6) of which it formed part (Is. xxviii. 16); and so possibly the meaning here is 'the chief corner-stone' of the foundation. But 'the head of the corner' is more naturally explained to be the top-stone (Zech. iv. 7), not only bonding the walls together, but completing the building. Israel is the 'head corner-stone.' The powers of the world flung it aside as useless, but God destined it for the most honourable and important place in the building of His kingdom in the world. The words express Israel's consciousness of its mission and destiny in the purpose of God. The perfect "is become" is a perfect of certainty. With the eye of faith the Psalmist sees the Divine purpose already realised.

Our Lord applies the passage to Himself in His solemn warning to the Pharisees of the consequences of rejecting Him (Matt. xxi. 42; Mk. xii. 10, 11; Lk. xx. 17). St Peter also quotes it (Acts iv. 11; 1 Pet. ii. 7). Comp. also Eph. ii. 20. The principle underlying this use of the words originally spoken of Israel is that Christ was the true representative of Israel, Who undertook and fulfilled the mission in which Israel had failed.

23. *This* &c.] Lit. *From Jehovah has this come to pass.* The order of the words emphasises *From Jehovah.* Cp. Neh. vi. 16, "They perceived that it was from our God that this work was wrought."

marvellous] Nothing less than a miracle, visibly attesting the providential care of Jehovah for His people. See note on lxxi. 17. The same word is used in Jer. xxxii. 17, 27 with reference to the promised restoration of Israel from captivity. "There is nothing too hard (lit. *wonderful*) for thee."

24. To Jehovah alone we owe this day of national rejoicing. Cp. Is. xxv. 9. "There was exceeding great gladness" is the description of the festival in Neh. viii. 17.

in it] Or, **in Him.** Cp. xxxii. 11.

25—29. Vows and prayers, blessings and praises.

25. We beseech thee, Jehovah, save, we beseech thee!
We beseech thee, Jehovah, prosper (us), we beseech thee!

A prayer that Jehovah will continue and carry forward the work

O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.
Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the LORD: 26
We have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.
God *is* the LORD, which hath shewed us light: 27
Bind the sacrifice with cords,
Even unto the horns of the altar.

which He has begun. Cp. Jer. xxxi. 7. For the form of entreaty cp. cxvi. 4, 16. *Now* of A.V. is a particle of supplication, not of time.

send now prosperity] The very words of Nehemiah's prayer (i. 11), "O Lord, I beseech thee...prosper now thy servant."

26. The priests in the Temple bless the entering procession. **Blessed in the name of Jehovah be he that entereth!** The accentuation rightly connects *in the name of Jehovah* with *blessed*. Cp. cxxix. 8; Deut. xxi. 5; 2 Sam. vi. 18.

With these words and with the *Hosanna*[1] ('save now') of the preceding verse, the multitudes greeted Jesus as He rode into Jerusalem (Matt. xxi. 9). The Psalm may already have received a Messianic interpretation. *Hosanna* was a "God save the king" (xx. 9); and "he that cometh" was a title of the Messiah (Matt. xi. 3). The disciples, expanding the original, shouted "Blessed is *the king* that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Luke xix. 38; cp. Mk. xi. 10).

27. **Jehovah is God, and hath given us light**] He has proved Himself to be *El*, the God of might, as of old at the Exodus (Ex. xv. 2): He has once more banished the darkness of the night of calamity and shewn us the light of His favour. There may be an allusion to the pillar of fire (Ex. xiii. 21; cp. Neh. ix. 12, 19); and to the priestly blessing (Num. vi. 25).

bind &c.] Evidently an exhortation to some act of thanksgiving for God's mercy. But the meaning is uncertain. It is doubtful whether *chag*, properly *a pilgrimage festival*, can mean *a festival sacrifice*: the horns were the most sacred part of the altar, on which the blood of the sin-offering was sprinkled (Lev. iv. 7; 1 Kings i. 50), and it seems improbable that the victims would ever have been bound to them: the preposition '*ad*, 'up to,' can hardly be used with the verb *bind* in the simple sense of 'to.' Various explanations have been proposed. (1) 'Bind the victim with cords (and lead it) up to the horns of the altar,' or, 'till it is sacrificed and its blood sprinkled on the horns of the altar': or, 'so as to fill all the space right up to the altar,' with reference to the number of beasts to be sacrificed. But these explanations, beside giving a doubtful meaning to *chag*, require much to be read into the sentence. (2) The LXX (συστήσασθε ἑορτὴν ἐν τοῖς πυκάζουσιν), Symm. (συνδήσατε ἐν παννχύρει πυκάσματα) and Jerome (frequentate sollemnitatem in fronduosis) explain the word rendered 'cords' above to mean

[1] *Hosanna* (ὡσαννά) represents a contracted form הוֹשַׁע־נָּא (cp. lxxxvi. 2), *hōshă'-nnā*, which was substituted for the fuller form הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא, *hōshī'āh nnā* used in the Psalm. See Dalman, *Gramm. des Jüd. Pal. Aram.* p. 198.

28 Thou *art* my God, and I will praise thee:
Thou art my God, I will exalt thee.
29 O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.

'thick boughs' (cp. Ezek. xix. 11, and the use of the cognate adj. in Lev. xxiii. 40, 'boughs of thick trees') with reference either to the boughs of which the booths were made, or to the bundles of branches, known in later times as *Lulab*, which the worshippers at the Feast of Tabernacles carried. Hence Cheyne, 'Bind the procession with branches, (step on) to the altar-horns': Baethgen, 'Link the dance with boughs, up to the altar-horns.' It is supposed that one of the ceremonies of the festival was a procession or sacred dance round the altar, in which the worshippers carried the *Lulab*, and waved them so as to touch the horns of the altar. These interpretations are equally questionable, and it is possible that the text is corrupt.

28. *I will praise thee*] Rather, **I will give thanks unto thee**, as in *v.* 29. The verse is another echo of Ex. xv. 2.

thou art *my God*] So the LXX. The Heb. text has, **O my God.** The word for 'God' in the preceding line is *El*, here it is *Elōhīm*. At the end of the verse the LXX repeats *v.* 21.

29. The Psalm concludes with the chorus of praise with which it began.

PSALM CXIX.

This great "Psalm of the Law" is based upon the prophetic (Ezra ix. 11) presentation of the Law in the Book of Deuteronomy, with the spirit and language of which its author's mind was saturated. It represents the religious ideas of Deuteronomy developed in the communion of a devout soul with God. It is the fruit of that diligent study of the Law which is enjoined in Deut. vi. 1—9, a beginning of the fulfilment of the promise of an inward and spiritual knowledge of it which is proclaimed by Jeremiah (xxxi. 33 ff.). The Psalmist is one whose earnest desire and stedfast purpose it is to make God's law the governing principle of his conduct, to surrender all self-willed thoughts and aims, to subordinate his whole life to the supremely perfect Will of God, with unquestioning faith in His all-embracing Providence and unfailing love.

The 'Law of God,' which the Psalmist describes in its manifold aspects as His law, word, promise, commandments, statutes, judgements, precepts, testimonies, ways, is not the law in the narrower sense of the Mosaic legislation or the Pentateuch. The Hebrew word *tōrāh* has a wider range of meaning, and here, as in Pss. i and xix, it must be understood to mean all Divine revelation as the guide of life. This it is which kindles the Psalmist's enthusiasm and demands his allegiance. It is no rigid code of commands and prohibitions, but a body of teaching, the full meaning of which can only be realised gradually and by the help of Divine instruction. It has been said that the Psalmist's

devotion to the Law contains the germ of Pharisaic legalism, but it may be questioned whether the observation is just. Nowhere does the Psalmist allow law to interfere between him and God; never is a formal observance of external rules substituted for the inward devotion of the heart. If sometimes his professions of obedience seem to savour of self-righteousness, his prayers for grace fully recognise that strength to obey must come from God. The Psalm is an acknowledgement of the blessing of a revelation, of the strength which the law gives to Israel in the midst of surrounding heathenism, and to the faithful Israelite in the presence of a prevailing laxity of faith and morals. In an age when the voice of prophecy was rarely heard, or perhaps was altogether silent, it begins to draw strength from meditation on the revelation made to past generations. It points no doubt towards the age of the Scribes, but it represents the best spirit of that age[1]. It is remarkable that a Psalm, emanating from the period in which the ritual law was codified and the Temple became the centre of Israel's religion, should contain no reference whatever to ceremonial or sacrifice. Doubtless the Psalmist would have included the ceremonial law as a part of God's commandments, but evidently he does not regard it as the principal part of them. The whole Psalm is animated by a profound inwardness and spirituality, as far removed as possible from the superstitious literalism of a later age. It shews no tendency to substitute mechanical observance of rules for the living application of principles. Such obedience, if it falls short of the full liberty of the Gospel, is at least a step towards it.

The close personal relation of the Psalmist to God is one of the most striking features of the Psalms in general, and in few Psalms is it more marked than in this. In every verse but one (115) or at most two (but on 128 see note) after the first three introductory verses God is addressed; in all but some fourteen verses the Psalmist addresses God in the first person, or, which is the same thing, as His servant.

The Psalmist has arranged his meditations in an elaborate alphabetical form, adopted partly perhaps as an aid to memory. The Psalm consists of 22 stanzas, according to the number of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Each of the 8 verses in a stanza begins with the same letter, and the letters are taken in their regular order. The arrangement of Lamentations iii presents the nearest parallel, but there the stanzas consist of three verses only. (For other alphabetical Psalms see *Introd.* p. lxiv.) This artificiality of structure seems to have hindered many commentators from appreciating the variety of the contents of the Psalm, and many have denied that any real connexion or progress of thought is to be found in it. In a sense this may be true: the verses are not so much linked together by logical connexion as united by their direction to a common centre, but each stanza has, as a rule, some leading thought, which gives it a distinctive character. Those who by long devotional use have become intimately familiar with the Psalm have found a significant variety in the apparent monotony of its language. For them it is 'the Psalm of the Saints'; 'the Alphabet of Divine Love'; 'the Christian's golden ABC of the praise, love, power

[1] Cp. Oehler's *O.T. Theology*, §§ 84, 201.

and use of the Word of God.' St Augustine deferred the exposition of it until he had finished the rest of the Psalter, and finally approached it with reluctance and diffidence:—"non tam propter eius notissimam longitudinem quam propter eius profunditatem paucis cognoscibilem... quanto enim videtur apertior, tanto mihi profundior videri solet" (Prooemium in Ps. cxviii). The cxixth Psalm, writes Dr Liddon, represents in the highest degree "the paradox of seeming simplicity overlying fathomless depth. It conveys at first an impression of tautology...it seems to reiterate with little attempt at variety the same aspirations, assurances, prayers, resolutions"; but a close and sympathetic study shews it to be "infinitely varied in its expressions, yet incessantly one in its direction; its variations are so delicate as to be almost imperceptible, its unity so emphatic as to be inexorably stamped upon its every line" (*The Priest in his Inner Life*, p. 46).

"The 119th Psalm," says Mr Ruskin, quoted by Archbp. Alexander, *Witness of the Psalms*, p. 302, "has become of all the most precious to me in its overflowing and glorious passion of love for the law of God."

Who the author of the Psalm was it is idle to speculate, but we may gather from it some idea of the circumstances among which he lived. He was sorely tried, but in his trials he recognised God's loving discipline for his good (*vv.* 50, 67, 71, 75, 107, 153). He had to suffer contempt (22, 39, 42) and even ill-treatment (121, 134) for his adherence to the law. The authorities of the community despised and persecuted him (23, 161); men of position and power, whom he designates as 'the proud' or 'the wicked,' mocked him, calumniated him, endeavoured to oppress and injure him (51, 61, 69, 78, 84, 85, 86, 95, 122, 150, 157). He was even in danger of his life (87, 109). His persecutors were not heathen, but faithless Israelites, for he describes them as forsaking God's law (53), wandering from His commandments (21), forgetting His words (139). They were selfish, self-satisfied men of the world, incapable of appreciating true religion (70). Their indifference to the law sometimes aroused his burning indignation (53); sometimes excited his profound sorrow (136). He was confronted by laxity if not actual apostasy (113, 158, 126): evil example might have tempted him to disown his faith and cast in his lot with evil-doers (29, 37, 115), but he has successfully resisted the temptation, for he knows God's estimate of their character (118, 119), and their certain destiny (155). Under these circumstances, however, it is no easy task for him to maintain his constancy. Repeatedly and earnestly he prays for fuller knowledge of the law and for strength to keep it, for relief from persecution, for protection and preservation.

We can thus form a tolerable idea of the circumstances of the Psalmist, or of the class which he represents, for it is probable that he speaks on behalf of others as well as himself, and interweaves their experiences with his own. This representative character of the Psalm explains some phrases which seem to go beyond individual experience, though it is clear on the whole that an individual and not the community is the speaker. At what time he lived it is impossible to say precisely. That it was in the post-exilic period is certain from the tone and language of the Psalm, but in what part of it is doubtful. The

beginning at any rate of the conditions described above is to be found in the evils which Ezra and Nehemiah endeavoured to remedy, and against which Malachi protested. (See e.g. Neh. v, vi, xiii; Mal. iii. 13—15.) There are not a few points of contact in thought and language between their writings and the Psalm. It may have been written about the middle of the fifth century B.C., possibly not till considerably later, but certainly not so late as the Maccabaean age. There are no traces of the struggles of the time when the possession of a copy of the law and the observance of the characteristic rites of Judaism were punishable with death.

Delitzsch infers from *vv.* 9 ff., 99, 100, 141, that the Psalmist was a young man; Ewald from *vv.* 84—87 that he was advanced in years. Neither inference seems to be justified. More probably he was a man of mature years, who had learned much by experience, but felt that he had still much more to learn.

Hitzig conjectures that he was a prisoner who beguiled the tedium of his imprisonment by the composition of the Psalm, and Delitzsch is inclined to adopt the suggestion. But there is no sufficient ground for such a hypothesis.

It is not likely that the Psalm was deliberately composed "as a *vade mecum* for Israelite young men." Doubtless it was well adapted for a compendium of instruction, but it attests itself to be the utterance of heartfelt devotion. Nor again is it a 'national' Psalm, in the sense that the Psalmist merges his own personality in that of the community and speaks in its name. Doubtless he speaks for others as well as himself; it is of the essence of inspired poetry to be representative and to possess a catholicity of thought; and often he appropriates the national experience, for to the Israelite membership in the covenant nation was a profound reality; but the Psalm breathes throughout the spirit of the most intense personal conviction, of the most intimate but deeply reverent communion with God.

It will be most convenient to consider once for all the various words for 'the Law' which recur so frequently in this Psalm[1], and to note some of its most characteristic phrases.

1. *Tōrāh*, 'law,' LXX *νόμος*, occurs 25 times. Cp. Deut. iv. 8 &c. It has however a much wider range of meaning than 'law.' It denotes (*a*) *direction* or *instruction*, whether human (Prov. i. 8) or Divine: (*b*) *a body of teaching*: (*c*) more definitely, *a law*, or (*d*) *a code of laws*, whether the Deuteronomic code or the Levitical legislation, 'the law of Moses': and so finally (*e*) the Pentateuch. Here, as in Pss. i and xix, it must be taken in its widest sense, as synonymous with the 'word' of Jehovah (Is. i. 10; ii. 3), to include all Divine revelation as the guide of life, prophetic exhortation as well as priestly direction, the sum of an Israelite's duty. (Cp. the use of 'the law' to denote the whole O.T. in John x. 34.)

[1] According to the Massoretic note on *v.* 122 one of the *ten* expressions,—pointing to the 'ten words' of the Decalogue,—'saying,' 'word,' 'testimony,' 'way,' 'judgement,' 'precept,' 'commandment,' 'law,' 'statute,' 'faithfulness' (according to another reading 'righteousness') occurs in every verse except *v.* 122 (to which *v.* 132 should be added). 'Faithfulness' however is an attribute of the law, not a synonym for it: and the word 'judgements' does not always mean 'ordinances.'

2. *Dābār*, 'word,' LXX λόγος (20 times), in plur. 'words' (3 times), is the most general term for God's communication of His Will to man, especially through prophets. It will be remembered that the "Ten Commandments" are literally the "Ten Words" (Deut. iv. 13). Cp. Deut. iv. 2, 10; &c.

3. *'Imrāh*, 'saying,' or collectively 'sayings,' LXX λόγιον (19 times), is a poetical synonym for *dābār*, rare in prose, but found in Is. v. 24 in parallelism with *tōrāh*. Cp. Deut. xxxiii. 9.

4. *Mitsvāh*, 'commandment,' LXX ἐντολή (21 times in plural, once in singular collectively), denotes a definite command imposed by authority. It is often coupled with the two following words in Deut. (e.g. vi. 1).

5. *Chuqqīm*, 21 times, once *chuqqōth*, 'statutes,' LXX δικαιώματα, lit. something engraved or inscribed, so what is prescribed or enacted. Frequently in Deut. (iv. 1 &c.).

6. *Mishpāṭīm*, 'judgements,' or 'ordinances,' LXX κρίματα (19 times in plur., 4 times in sing.), has some variety of meaning. The idea in the word is "that of a *judicial decision*, made authoritatively once, and constituting a rule, a precedent, applicable to other similar cases in the future" (Driver on Deut. iv. 1); but in several passages of the Psalm it means the *judicial acts* of Jehovah, executing judgement on the wicked, and revealing or vindicating His law. Common in Deut. (iv. 1 &c.).

7. *Piqqudīm*, δικαιώματα (21 times), 'precepts,' 'injunctions,' LXX ἐντολαί, a poetical word found only in the Psalter (xix. 8; ciii. 18; cxi. 7).

8. *'Ēdāh* or *'ēdūth* (sing. once, plur. 22 times), 'testimony,' LXX μαρτύρια. The idea of the word is "that of an *attestation*, or formal affirmation; hence, as referred to God, a solemn declaration of His Will on points (especially) of moral or religious duty, or a protest against human propensity to deviate from it...." The word came to be used "as a general designation of moral and religious ordinances, conceived as a Divinely instituted standard of conduct." The term 'testimony' in the singular is applied to the Decalogue "as a concise and forcible statement of God's will and human duty" (Driver on Deut. iv. 45). Cf. Deut. iv. 45; vi. 17, 20: in the sing. *ēdūth* is frequent in Ex., Lev., Num.

9. *Derek*, 'way,' LXX ὁδός, denotes the course of conduct marked out by God's law. Cp. Deut. v. 33; ix. 12, &c.

10. *'Orach*, 'path,' a poetical synonym for *derek*; not in Deut., but common in Prov.

The *attributes* applied to the Law should also be studied. Like its Author (*v.* 137, cp. Deut. xxxii. 4) it is perfectly righteous. The note of righteousness is constantly repeated; in all its aspects the Law answers to that perfect standard which God is to Himself for all His works and words. Its faithfulness and truth correspond to the faithfulness and truth of His nature; it is sharply contrasted with all that is false in belief and conduct.

Other constantly recurring expressions should also be noted. The Psalmist's repeated protestations that he has 'observed' or 'kept' the law, his resolutions to do so, and his prayers for strength to fulfil them,

answer to the repeated injunctions of Deut. (iv. 2 &c.). 'With a (my) whole heart,' with entire devotion of thought and will, is a phrase characteristic alike of this Psalm and of the Book of Deut.[1] (iv. 29; vi. 5 &c.) where it is often coupled with 'the whole soul,' the organ of feeling and emotion. In Deut. the Israelites are repeatedly exhorted to *learn* the statutes and judgements (v. 1) and to teach them to their children (iv. 10); and repeatedly the Psalmist prays that he may be taught. The Psalmist's reiterated prayers for 'understanding' recall the language of Deut. iv. 6. 'Life' is held out in Deut. (iv. 1 &c.) as the reward of obedience; and for 'life' the Psalmist continually pleads—'quicken thou me'—'let me live' (25, 37, 40, 88, 107, 149, 154, 156, 159, 116, 144). The source of 'life' he finds in the law and promises of God (50, 93): and by 'life' he means not simply preservation from death, but liberation from all, whether within or without, that crushes and paralyses life, and hinders its proper use and enjoyment; for 'life' includes the ideas of light and joy and prosperity. It finds its fullest realisation in communion with God. The original promise of life to the nation is coupled with the promise of the possession of the land, but the latter now drops out of sight, and the conception of 'life' is approximating towards the higher meaning of the word in the N.T. Cp. Deut. viii. 3. Very noteworthy is the Psalmist's enthusiastic *love* for the Law. The love which the Israelite was bidden to cherish for Jehovah (Deut. vi. 5 &c.) is kindled by the manifold revelation of His Will in the Law. "O how I love thy law: it is my meditation all the day" (97). It is no irksome restraint of his liberty, but his delight, his joy, his treasure, his comfort, the subject of his meditations by day and by night, the source of trust and hope amid all the perplexities and troubles of life. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

ALEPH.

(א) Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, 119
Who walk in the law of the LORD.
(א) Blessed *are* they that keep his testimonies, 2

1—8. *Aleph.* Loyal obedience to Jehovah's law is the source of man's truest happiness, and therefore the Psalmist prays that it may be the fixed rule of his life, and that he may learn to understand it better.

1. *Blessed* &c.] **Happy the perfect** (or **upright**) **in way**, *integri vitae*, those whose course of life is directed and governed by single-hearted devotion to Jehovah, and integrity in dealing with their fellow men. Cp. i. 1; xv. 2 note; ci. 2, 6.

who walk &c.] Integrity of life is defined as a walking in Jehovah's law. This is the path (*v.* 33) which man must follow if he would avoid sin. Cp. Ex. xvi. 4; Luke i. 6. For the meaning of 'law' see above, p. 703.

2. *testimonies*] See above, p. 704.

[1] Deut. prefers the form *lēbāb*, the Psalm, except in *v.* 7, uses *lēb*.

And that seek him with the whole heart.
3 (ℵ) They also do no iniquity:
They walk in his ways.
4 (ℵ) Thou hast commanded *us*
To keep thy precepts diligently.
5 (ℵ) O that my ways were directed
To keep thy statutes!
6 (ℵ) Then shall I not be ashamed,
When I have respect unto all thy commandments.
7 (ℵ) I will praise thee with uprightness of heart,
When I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.
8 (ℵ) I will keep thy statutes:
O forsake me not utterly.

and that *seek him* &c.] Omit *and*. Cp. *v.* 10; Deut. iv. 29. The word includes not only approaching God in prayer and worship, but studying to understand His Will expressed in His law.

with the whole heart] See above, p. 705.

3. This verse is to be connected with the preceding one:

Yea, have wrought no unrighteousness,
Have walked in his ways.

4. **Thou hast commanded thy precepts,**
That (men) should observe them diligently.

This verse calls attention to the Author of the law (THOU is emphatic), and to the purpose of its enactment. Cp. Deut. iv. 2. On 'precepts' see above, p. 704.

5. **Oh that my ways were established**
To observe thy statutes! (R.V.)

The thought of God's Will expressed in *v.* 4 naturally evokes a prayer that in his whole life and conduct he may fulfil God's Will, not fitfully and uncertainly, but constantly and consistently. For *established* cp. Prov. iv. 26.

6. *Then* points back to *v.* 5, and is further explained in 6 *b*: *then*... namely, *when I* &c. No real disgrace or disappointment can befall him whose single aim is the observance of God's law in all its parts.

7. **I will give thanks unto thee**...**when I learn** &c. (R.V.)] The Psalmist knows that he has not yet attained to a complete knowledge of God's revealed Will; but he gives thanks for every advance. The will to obey (*vv.* 5, 6) is the condition of progress (cp. John vii. 17); and throughout the Psalm he prays repeatedly for teaching and direction.

8. *I will keep*] R.V. **I will observe**, as in *vv.* 4, 5.

thy statutes] *Ceremonies* in P.B.V. is a curiously misleading rendering, taken from Münster's *caerimonias tuas*. Coverdale's version of 1535 has *statutes*.

O forsake me not utterly] As Israel in the Exile had been for a time forsaken by Jehovah as the punishment of its sin (Is. xlix. 14; liv. 7; cp. Deut. xxxi. 17).

BETH.

(ב) Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? 9
By taking heed *thereto* according to thy word.
(ב) With my whole heart have I sought thee: 10
O let me not wander from thy commandments.
(ב) Thy word have I hid in mine heart, 11
That I might not sin against thee.
(ב) Blessed *art* thou, O LORD: 12
Teach me thy statutes.
(ב) With my lips have I declared 13
All the judgments of thy mouth.
(ב) I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, 14
As *much as* in all riches.
(ב) I will meditate in thy precepts, 15
And have respect unto thy ways.

9—16. *Beth.* Love for God's law the safeguard and the joy of life.

9. *a young man*] Who most needs help to keep himself pure from sin (xxv. 7). Cp. xxxiv. 11 ff.; and the constant address of the teacher to his disciple in the Book of Proverbs, 'My son.'

by taking heed &c.] The answer to the question of the previous line. The object of the verb is not expressed, and the exact meaning is doubtful. It may be 'by taking heed *to himself* according to the rule of Thy word'; cp. P.B.V., 'even by ruling himself after thy word': or more probably, 'by observing *thy statutes* (*vv.* 4, 6) according to thy commandment.' The LXX and Jerome seem to represent a different reading, 'by observing thy words.'

10. Cp. *v.* 2*b*.

O let me not wander &c.] Let me not err through ignorance or inadvertence (*v.* 67; xix. 12). My intention is good, but my knowledge is imperfect and my strength is small. "The self-mistrust of the second clause is a proof of the reality of the first" (Aglen).

11. *have I hid*] Better as R.V. have I laid up, stored up and treasured in my heart as a safeguard against sin. Cp. Job xxiii. 12; Prov. ii. 1; vii. 1; Jer. xxxi. 33.

12. The confession of Jehovah's adorableness is a fitting preface to the prayer for further instruction. Cp. *v.* 7.

13. *have I declared*] Or, recounted. The faithful Israelite was not merely to treasure in his mind God's declarations of His Will, but to "talk of them" (Deut. vi. 7), to produce his treasure for the good of others (Matt. xii. 35).

14. Obedience to the laws by which God attests His Will is the true wealth which brings joy to life. Cp. the teaching of Proverbs ii. 4; iii. 13 ff.; viii. 10, 11, 18, 19; xvi. 16.

15. *thy ways*] Or, paths (Jer. *semitas*), a different word from that

16 (ב) I will delight myself in thy statutes:
I will not forget thy word.

GIMEL.

17 (ג) Deal bountifully with thy servant, *that* I may live,
And keep thy word.
18 (ג) Open thou mine eyes,
That I may behold wondrous *things* out of thy law.
19 (ג) I *am* a stranger in the earth:
Hide not thy commandments from me.
20 (ג) My soul breaketh for the longing
That it hath unto thy judgments at all times.
21 (ג) Thou hast rebuked the proud *that are* cursed,
Which do err from thy commandments.

in *vv.* 1, 3, 5. It is for the most part a poetical word, and is used in *vv.* 9, 101, 104, 128.

16. Cp. *vv.* 47, 70.

17—24. *Gimel.* The knowledge and observance of God's law the aim of life, a strength and comfort in time of contempt and persecution.

17. *Deal bountifully*] Cp. xiii. 6; cxvi. 7; cxlii. 7.

and keep thy word] Better as R.V. **So will I observe thy word.** "The Psalmist desires continued life mainly because it affords the opportunity of continued obedience" (Maclaren). Cp. cxviii. 17.

18. *Open*] Lit. *uncover*. Natural sight is unable to discern the mysteries (cp. *v.* 27) of Divine revelation; hence this prayer for the removal of the veil from his eyes. Cp. 2 Kings vi. 17 (a different word); Eph. i. 17, 18.

19. *a stranger*] **A sojourner** (*ger*), or alien residing under protection in a country not his own, needs to be instructed in the law of the land that he may not offend against it. Such a 'sojourner' is the Psalmist upon earth, and therefore he prays God, the Lord of the earth, to impart to him a full knowledge of his obligations. The further thought may be implied that as his residence is only temporary, he would fain make the best use of life which may be short. Cp. xxxix. 12, note.

20. A plea for an answer to the prayer of *v.* 19. His soul *breaks*, lit. *is crushed*, overwhelmed and consumed with longing for the fuller knowledge of God's judgements, i.e. the authoritative declaration of His Will. See above, p. 704.

21. The A.V. follows the Massoretic text; but the more obvious construction of the verse is that of the LXX, Syr., and Jer., followed by P.B.V. and R.V. marg. **Thou rebukest the proud: cursed are they** which do wander &c. God's *rebuke* is that sentence of condemnation which carries its own execution with it (ix. 5). The perfect tense (*hast rebuked*) states a general truth and is best translated by the

(ג) Remove from me reproach and contempt; 22
For I have kept thy testimonies.
(ג) Princes also did sit *and* speak against me: 23
But thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.
(ג) Thy testimonies also *are* my delight 24
And my counsellors.

DALETH.

(ד) My soul cleaveth unto the dust: 25
Quicken thou me according to thy word.
(ד) I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: 26

present, *thou rebukest*. *The proud* (*vv.* 51, 69, 78, 85, 122; cf. Mal. iii. 15; iv. 1) are those who sin wilfully and presumptuously (xix. 13; Deut. xvii. 12, 13), careless or apostate Israelites. See above, p. 702.

22. *Remove*] R.V. take away, lit. *strip off*, shame being regarded as a covering; but probably *gōl*, 'roll away,' should be read instead of *gal*, shame being regarded as a burden. This verse is to be connected with *v.* 21. 'Thou rebukest the proud; rebuke them now, and relieve me of the contempt which they heap upon me for my observance of Thy law.'

23. A further proof of his fidelity. Though those in authority sit in council and devise plans for his ruin, he continues to meditate on Jehovah's statutes. Cp. Dan. vi. 4 ff. It has been maintained that foreign princes must be meant, and consequently that the Psalmist must be speaking in the name of the nation, and not as an individual. But *princes* was the title commonly given to the Israelite nobles in post-exilic times, and the Psalmist was evidently persecuted by wealthy and powerful countrymen. Cp. *v.* 161, and see above, p. 702.

24. When he is scorned by men, he can still find delight in God's law; though his enemies take counsel against him, he has counsellors to direct him in God's statutes. The LXX seems to have read, *and thy judgements are my counsellors*, a reading which improves the structure of the verse.

25—32. *Daleth*. In the midst of humiliation and trial the Psalmist protests the sincerity of his purpose, and prays for deepened knowledge to keep him true and steadfast.

25. The Psalmist is in deep distress. He lies prostrate, crushed and unable to rise (xliv. 25; vii. 5; xxii. 15); but he can pray that God will revive him, and give him fresh strength and joy in life according to His promise. On the prayer *quicken* or *revive me* see above, p. 705. Cp. lxxi. 20; lxxx. 18; lxxxv. 6; cxxxviii. 7; cxliii. 11.

according to thy word] For life is repeatedly promised as the reward of obedience to the law of God. See Deut. viii. 3; xxx. 6, 15, 19, 20; xxxii. 47.

26. *I have* recounted *my ways*, laid before Thee in detail all the concerns of my life, and thou hast answered me. Answered prayer is

Teach me thy statutes.

27 (ד) Make me to understand the way of thy precepts:
So shall I talk of thy wondrous works.

28 (ד) My soul melteth for heaviness:
Strengthen thou me according unto thy word.

29 (ד) Remove from me the way of lying:
And grant me thy law graciously.

30 (ד) I have chosen the way of truth:
Thy judgments have I laid *before me.*

31 (ד) I have stuck unto thy testimonies:
O LORD, put me not to shame.

32 (ד) I will run the way of thy commandments,
When thou shalt enlarge my heart.

HE.

33 (ה) Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes;

a proof of God's good will, and therefore he prays for yet further instruction, *teach me thy statutes.*

27. The prayer of 26 *b* is further developed. This prayer for deeper insight recurs in *vv.* 34, 73, 125, 144, 169.

so shall I talk of thy wondrous works] Rather, **that I may meditate** (as in *vv.* 15, 23) **on thy wonders**, the mysteries of God's Will revealed in His law (*v.* 18).

28. When my soul dissolves in tears (Job xvi. 20) for grief, strengthen me according to Thy promise.

29, 30. The way of falsehood (cp. 104, 128), all conduct that is not governed by God's truth, is contrasted with **the way of faithfulness**, of loyalty to Him. Though he has made the great choice, and set before himself (xvi. 8) the declarations of God's Will as the rule of his life, he prays that God will keep him from disloyalty, and that for this end He will graciously impart to him fresh instruction in His law.

31. The protestation of a good conscience is continued. **I cleave** *unto thy testimonies* (cp. Deut. x. 20; xi. 22; xiii. 4; xxx. 20); *put me not to shame*; let me not be disappointed of the blessings promised to faithful obedience.

32. When his heart is set free from the cramping constraint of trouble and anxiety, the Psalmist will use his liberty for more energetic service. Cp. xxv. 17 note; Is. lx. 5. Another explanation makes the second clause the reason for the first, *I will run...for thou dost enlarge* &c.: I will serve Thee with alacrity, for when I do so, Thou dost expand my heart with a sense of joy and freedom.

33—40. *Hē.* A series of prayers for instruction guidance and strength.

33. *Teach me*] Or, *instruct me in...*; the verb from which *tōrāh*, 'instruction,' 'law,' is derived. Cp. xxvii. 11; lxxxvi. 11.

And I shall keep it *unto* the end.
(ה) Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; 34
Yea, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart.
(ה) Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; 35
For therein do I delight.
(ה) Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, 36
And not to covetousness.
(ה) Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; 37
And quicken thou me in thy way.
(ה) Stablish thy word unto thy servant, 38
Who *is devoted* to thy fear.
(ה) Turn away my reproach which I fear: 39
For thy judgments *are* good.
(ה) Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: 40
Quicken me in thy righteousness.

and I shall keep it] Or, *that I may keep it*; and similarly in *v.* 34, *that I may keep thy law, yea observe it* &c.

unto *the end*] The word *'ēqeb* is generally rendered thus, here and in *v.* 112, but it nowhere else has this sense. In Ps. xix. 11; Prov. xxii. 4, it means *reward*; and so Baethgen would explain it here; *I will keep it as reward.* "In xix. 11 a reward is expected for keeping the law: in Ps. cxix the life which is pleasing to God is itself regarded as reward."

36. *covetousness*] Or, *unjust gain.* With this and the following verse cp. Is. xxxiii. 15.

37. *vanity* includes all that is false, unreal, worthless. Cp. 1 John ii. 15—17.

in thy way] So the LXX. The Heb. text as pointed reads *in thy ways.* He prays to God the author of life for vigour to resist temptation and walk in His ways.

"'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
Oh life, not death, for which we pant,
More life, and fuller, that I want."

38. *who* is devoted *to thy fear*] This rendering is retained in R.V. marg., but the order of the words is in favour of rendering

Confirm unto thy servant thy promise
Which belongeth to the fear of thee,

or, Which maketh for the fear of thee. Perform for me the promises made to those who fear Thee: or, which aim at promoting and encouraging reverence for Thee. Cp. cxxx. 4.

39. *my reproach*] Here, as in *vv.* 22, 23, 42, the scorn which he has to bear for his loyalty to God's law.

for thy judgments are *good*] And therefore I ought not to suffer for observing them. For *judgments* see *vv.* 13, 20, 30.

40. His will is good; but he needs fresh strength, and for this he

VAU.

41 (ו) Let thy mercies come also *unto* me, O LORD,
Even thy salvation, according to thy word.
42 (ו) So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me:
For I trust in thy word.
43 (ו) And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth;
For I have hoped in thy judgments.
44 (ו) So shall I keep thy law continually
For ever and ever.
45 (ו) And I will walk at liberty:
For I seek thy precepts.
46 (ו) I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings,

prays on the ground of God's righteousness, that attribute in virtue of which He must needs be true to His covenant-promises. Cp. v. 8, note.

41—48. *Vāv.* Prayers for grace and courage to witness a good confession.

41. *thy mercies*] Or, **thy lovingkindnesses**, manifested in *deliverance*, according to Thy promise.

42. **So shall I have an answer for him that reproacheth me** (R.V.)] Personal experience of God's manifold lovingkindness manifested in his deliverance will enable him to return a conclusive answer to those who taunt him with the uselessness of serving God. P.B.V. follows some of the Ancient Versions in reading the plural, *my blasphemers*.

43. This verse is to be taken in connexion with *vv.* 41, 42. 'And so let me not be deprived of power to bear witness to the truth before my persecutors, as I should be if I had no practical experience of Thy goodness, for I have waited with hope for Thy judgements'; here as usually, not judicial acts, but principles of right, which he expects to see realised in life.

44. *So shall* **I observe** *thy law*] This is his desire and purpose, if God will grant him grace.

continually for ever and ever] Unceasingly to the end of his life. Or does he merge his own personality in that of the nation, and look forward to the service of the generations to come?

45. *And I will walk at liberty*] Lit. *in a broad place*, for God's commandment is "exceeding broad"; its observance is no restraint but the truest freedom. Or the meaning may be, *Let me walk at liberty*, free from the constraint of anxiety and persecution. Cp. *v.* 32; cxviii. 5.

I seek] Or, **I have studied**, given diligent heed to.

46. *before kings*] Like Daniel and his companions, or Nehemiah, or the martyrs of the Maccabaean period, he is ready, if need be, to

And will not be ashamed.
(ז) And I will delight myself in thy commandments, 47
Which I have loved.
(ז) My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, 48
which I have loved;
And I will meditate in thy statutes.

ZAIN.

(ז) Remember the word unto thy servant, 49
Upon which thou hast caused me to hope.
(ז) This *is* my comfort in my affliction: 50
For thy word hath quickened me.
(ז) The proud have had me greatly in derision: 51
Yet have I not declined from thy law.
(ז) I remembered thy judgments of old, O LORD; 52
And have comforted myself.

confess his faith boldly before the highest human authorities. Cp. Matt. x. 18; Acts xxvi. 1, 2.

47. Cp. *vv.* 16, 70.

which I love] Cp. *vv.* [48], 97, 113, 119, 127, 140, 159, 163; and see above, p. 705.

48. And I will lift up my hands unto thy commandments] The attitude of prayer, significant of an uplifted heart (xxviii. 2), and here of reverence and devotion.

which I have loved] The clause overweights the verse, and has probably been accidentally repeated from *v.* 47.

49—56. *Zayin.* In the midst of manifold trials God's law has brought hope, consolation, life, joy.

49. *upon which*] R.V. marg. *wherein*, a doubtful construction. Better as R.V. because. God's word of promise has given him hope, and he pleads that God will not forget it. As a faithful servant he ventures to claim a corresponding faithfulness from his Lord.

50. *This*] i.e. Thy word, if the rendering *for* is retained in the next line. But it is better to render, *This is my comfort*...that *thy word* &c. Past experience of the life-giving sustaining power of God's promise is his comfort in affliction.

51. *have had me greatly in derision*] Lit. *have scorned me exceedingly.* The 'proud' men of whom the Psalmist speaks belonged to the class of 'scorners,' the freethinkers who make what is good and holy the object of their ridicule. Cp. Prov. xxi. 24; and note on Ps. i. 1. Though they ridicule him, he does not swerve from his adherence to God's law.

52. *I* have *remembered thy judgments* which have been from ancient times (LXX ἀπ' αἰῶνος, cp. Lk. i. 70), either (as generally in the Psalm) the Divine ordinances or principles of right revealed from ancient times,

53 (ז) Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked
That forsake thy law.
54 (ז) Thy statutes have been my songs
In the house of my pilgrimage.
55 (ז) I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night,
And have kept thy law.
56 (ז) This I had,
Because I kept thy precepts.

CHETH.

57 (ח) *Thou art* my portion, O LORD:
I have said that *I* would keep thy words.
58 (ח) I intreated thy favour with *my* whole heart:
Be merciful unto me according to thy word.

which are true and sure in spite of all the scoffers' ridicule: or perhaps here, the judicial acts by which those ordinances have been maintained and vindicated in the course of history, and which will in due time descend upon the scoffers of the present.

53. *Horror* &c.] **Hot indignation seizes me.** It was not unmingled with sorrow, *v.* 136.

that forsake thy law] Careless or apostate Israelites are clearly meant.

54. God's statutes form the theme of his songs; they calm his mind and refresh his spirit in this transitory life of trial (Gen. xlvii. 9; 1 Chron. xxix. 15), as songs beguile the night (Job xxxv. 10), or cheer the traveller on his journey.

pilgrimage] Lit. *sojournings*. Cp. *v.* 19.

55. The constant recollection of the Lawgiver and all that He has revealed Himself to be, is the most powerful motive to observance of His laws.

in the night] Cp. *v.* 62; i. 2.

56. Either, *This I have had*, all this comfort and steadfastness and joy in the midst of the trials and sorrows of life have been mine, *because I have kept thy precepts*: or, *This I have had*, that *I have kept thy precepts*;—whatever advantages others may have had which I have not enjoyed, this supreme privilege has been mine, the keeping of Thy precepts. If this is the meaning, it strikes the keynote of the next stanza.

57—64. *Chêth.* The Psalmist's devotion to Jehovah and His law.

57. Thou art *my portion, O LORD*] So some MSS of the LXX (AT); but the Heb. text must be rendered, *Jehovah is my portion: I have purposed to observe thy words*: or, *Jehovah is my portion, have I said: that I may observe thy words*: or, more simply, with cod. ℵ of the LXX, and the Vulg., *Jehovah my portion, I have purposed* &c. Cp. xvi. 5; lxxiii. 26; cxlii. 5.

58. *be merciful*] **Be gracious**, as in iv. 1, and often. Cp. *vv.* 29, 132.

(ח) I thought on my ways, 59
And turned my feet unto thy testimonies.
(ח) I made haste, and delayed not 60
To keep thy commandments.
(ח) The bands of the wicked have robbed me: 61
But I have not forgotten thy law.
(ח) At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee 62
Because of thy righteous judgments.
(ח) I *am* a companion of all *them* that fear thee, 63
And of them that keep thy precepts.
(ח) The earth, O LORD, is full *of* thy mercy: 64
Teach me thy statutes.

TETH.

(ט) Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, 65
O LORD, according unto thy word.
(ט) Teach me good judgment and knowledge: 66
For I have believed thy commandments.
(ט) Before I was afflicted I went astray: 67
But now have I kept thy word.

59, 60. The diligent consideration of his conduct has ever led him back to order the course of his life in accordance with those laws which attest the Will of God and protest against man's wilfulness, and that without hesitation or procrastination.

61. The cords of the wicked have entangled me] A metaphor from the snare or noose of the hunter. Cp. *v.* 110; xviii. 5. Though the wicked lay snares for him, he will not cast in his lot with those who forget God. P.B.V. and A.V. follow some Jewish authorities, and Luther.

62. Far from forgetting the law, he will interrupt his sleep with thanksgivings for its righteous ordinances (*v.* 7).

64. Cp. xxxiii. 5; cxlv. 9. Jehovah's universal lovingkindness makes the Psalmist long to know more of His Will.

65—72. *Têth.* Jehovah's goodness toward His servant manifested in all His dealings, even in the discipline of affliction.

65. *according unto thy word*] i.e. thy promise. Cp. Deut. vi. 24; x. 13; xxx. 9, 15.

66. *good judgment*] Lit. *goodness of taste*, the power to distinguish promptly and surely between right and wrong.

for I have believed in *thy commandments*] Prayer for further instruction is grounded on past loyalty to the known Will of God.

67. *I went astray*] I did err; the word used in Lev. v. 18; Num. xv. 28. The verse is equally applicable to Israel as a nation, taught by the discipline of exile, or to the Psalmist as an individual. Cp. *vv.* 71, 75; Ps. cxviii. 18; Job v. 17.

68 (ט) Thou *art* good, and doest good;
Teach me thy statutes.
69 (ט) The proud have forged a lie against me:
But I will keep thy precepts with *my* whole heart.
70 (ט) Their heart is as fat as grease;
But I delight *in* thy law.
71 (ט) *It is* good for me that I have been afflicted;
That I might learn thy statutes.
72 (ט) The law of thy mouth *is* better unto me
Than thousands of gold and silver.

JOD.

73 (י) Thy hands have made me and fashioned me:
Give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.
74 (י) They that fear thee will be glad when they see me;
Because I have hoped in thy word.
75 (י) I know, O LORD, that thy judgments *are* right,
And *that* thou *in* faithfulness hast afflicted me.

68. God is good in nature and in action, kind and beneficent. 'Bonus es tu, beneficus' (Jer.). Cp. Deut. viii. 16. To such a loving God he can appeal with confidence to teach him (Matt. vii. 11).

69. *The proud have forged a lie against me*] Lit. *have plastered falsehood over me*, "making his true character unrecognisable" (Del.), or perhaps, questioning the sincerity and disinterestedness of his service; but his answer to their calumny is a more resolute determination to obey: *as for me, with my whole heart will I keep thy precepts.*

70. Gross is their heart as fat (lit. the fat of the midriff), as insensible and incapable of receiving any spiritual impression as the fat near it (xvii. 10; lxxiii. 7; Is. vi. 10); as for me, in thy law do I delight.

71. Cp. *v.* 67.

72. This is the lesson he has learnt in the school of affliction—the inestimable preciousness of God's law. Cp. *v.* 14; Prov. viii. 10, 11.

73—80. *Yōd.* God has afflicted him in faithfulness: yet now O that He would comfort him, for the encouragement of the godly and the confusion of the proud.

73. *fashioned*] Or, *established.* Cp. Job x. 8; Deut. xxxii. 6.
give me understanding &c.] Complete Thy work: Thou hast made my bodily frame, perfect my spirit.

74. Let them that fear thee see me and be glad: let them rejoice when they see in me an example of the reward of trustful patience. Cp. lxix. 32.

75. *that thy judgments* are *right*] Righteous (R.V.), lit. *righteousness.* Cp. *vv.* 7, 62, &c.
hast afflicted me] Cp. Deut. viii. 2, 3, 16, where the same word

(ו) Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, 76
According to thy word unto thy servant.
(ז) Let thy tender mercies come *unto* me, that I may live: 77
For thy law *is* my delight.
(ח) Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: 78
But I will meditate in thy precepts.
(ט) Let those that fear thee turn unto me, 79
And those that have known thy testimonies.
(י) Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; 80
That I be not ashamed.

CAPH.

(כ) My soul fainteth for thy salvation: 81
But I hope in thy word.
(כ) Mine eyes fail for thy word, 82
Saying, When wilt thou comfort me?

is rendered *to humble*. All God's laws are in conformity with the perfect standard of His righteousness: faithfulness to His covenant leads him to use the discipline of chastisement to teach men obedience to those laws. Cp. Deut. xxxii. 4.

76, 77. Yet man needs to be comforted and revived lest he be overwhelmed by trouble (Heb. xii. 11). Cp. *vv.* 50, 82.

thy merciful kindness] thy lovingkindness.

thy word] of promise; e.g. Jer. xxxi. 13; Is. li. 3; lxvi. 13; Zech. i. 17.

77. *thy tender mercies*] Thy compassions (*v.* 156). Cp. Deut. xiii. 17, 18; Is. xlix. 13; Jer. 7; Zech. i. 16.

78. *for they dealt perversely with me without a cause*] Better, for they have subverted me by falsehood. Cp. Lam. iii. 36.

79. *and those that have known* &c.] Even those who know. So the *Q'rē*, with LXX, Syr., Jer. The *K'thībh* has and they shall know, or, that they may know, with the Targ. This gives the best sense. Let my experience of Thy mercy shew the godly the blessedness of keeping Thy testimonies.

80. *sound*] Perfect, cp. *v.* 1.

81—88. *Kaph.* Faith persevering in the midst of persecution when God defers His help, and seems to be leaving him to be the prey of his enemies.

81, 82. The soul grows faint, the eye dim, with the prolonged strain of watching for the fulfilment of God's promise to deliver His servant. Cp. *v.* 123; lxix. 3; lxxxiv. 2; Lam. iv. 17.

82. *saying*] R.V. while I say.

83 (כ) For I am become like a bottle in the smoke;
Yet do I not forget thy statutes.
84 (כ) How many *are* the days of thy servant?
When wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?
85 (כ) The proud have digged pits for me,
Which *are* not after thy law.
86 (כ) All thy commandments *are* faithful:
They persecute me wrongfully; help thou me.
87 (כ) They had almost consumed me upon earth;
But I forsook not thy precepts.
88 (כ) Quicken me after thy lovingkindness;
So shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth.

83. *For I am become like* a wineskin *in the smoke;* yet &c.] As a wineskin out of use hung up among the rafters of the roof grows shrivelled and blackened by the smoke till it almost loses its original appearance, so the Psalmist is growing emaciated and disfigured by suffering and sorrow till he can scarcely be recognised. Cp. cix. 24. Some commentators suppose that there is a reference to the custom of mellowing wine by putting it in the smoke (cp. "amphorae fumum bibere institutae," Horace, *Odes*, III. 8. 11), and that the figure means that the Psalmist is being exposed to suffering to soften and mature his character, though the process is being continued so long that he is becoming unsightly and unrecognisable. At first sight this explanation is attractive, but the simile is clearly intended to describe bad not good effects of suffering. In spite of these, he does not forget God's commandments. The curious rendering of LXX, Symm., Syr., Jer., *like a wineskin in hoar frost*, has no claim to consideration.

84. *How many* &c.] Few at the most. The brevity of life is an argument for the speedy punishment of the Psalmist's persecutors, otherwise he may not live to see God's justice vindicated. Cp. lxxxix. 47; cii. 11 ff.

85. *pits*] A metaphor from the pitfalls used by hunters. Cp. lvii. 6; and especially Jer. xviii. 20, 22.

which] Rather, who. His enemies are presumptuous sinners, who despise and defy God's law (*vv.* 21, 53). Godless Israelites are clearly meant.

86. *faithful*] Lit. *faithfulness* (cp. *vv.* 75, 138); they are an expression of the character of God, in strong contrast to the falsehood (cp. *v.* 78) with which his persecutors assail him.

87. His persecutors had almost succeeded in making an end of him, yet he still held fast to the law. The second line brings the godlessness of their conduct into prominence.

upon earth] The scene of life: or, in the land: the Psalmist and such as he were almost exterminated. Cp. xii. 1.

88. If he is to continue glorifying God by the observance of His law,

LAMED.

(ל) For ever, O LORD, 89
Thy word *is* settled in heaven.

(ל) Thy faithfulness *is* unto all generations: 90
Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.

(ל) They continue *this* day according to thine ordinances: 91
For all *are* thy servants.

(ל) Unless thy law *had been* my delights, 92
I should then have perished in mine affliction.

God must preserve his life, and free it from the hindrances which impede its devotion to His service.

89—96. *Lamed.* The eternity, immutability, and comprehensiveness of God's law, which has been the Psalmist's support in affliction.

89. The A.V. rightly follows the LXX, Targ. and Jer. in treating the verse as one clause, the accentual division of the Hebr. being regarded as rhythmical not logical. Jehovah's word is eternal, immutable; it belongs to that sphere which is raised above the accidents of chance and change, and shares its attributes. Cp. lxxxix. 2.

is *settled*] **Standeth fast.**

90. The permanence of the earth which God has created is an emblem and guarantee of the permanence of His faithfulness. Cp. lxxviii. 69. Kay refers to a sermon by Chalmers on "The Constancy of God in His Works an argument for the Faithfulness of God in His Word."

91. This verse may be rendered,

According to thine ordinances [*judgements*] **they abide** [*stand*] **this day,**
For all things are thy servants.

The thought of the preceding verses is developed. Heaven and earth obey and subserve the ordinances of God. His Will is the universal law of Nature.

A slightly different rendering however agrees better with the second line: **For thy judgements they** (heaven and earth) **stand ready this day**; they are constantly prepared to perform Thy behests, for all things subserve Thy Will.

Either of these renderings is preferable to that of R.V. marg., *As for thy judgements, they abide this day.*

this *day*] i.e. *unto this day.*

"From the ministering of the Archangel to the labour of the insect, from the poising of the planets to the gravitation of a grain of dust, the power and glory of all creatures, and all matter, consist in their *obedience,* not in their freedom." Ruskin, *The Two Paths,* Lect. v., quoted by Kay.

92. *then*] emphatically, *in that case.* But for the refreshment of God's law, he would have utterly lost heart in affliction (Is. xl. 29—31).

93 (ל) I will never forget thy precepts:
For with them thou hast quickened me.
94 (ל) I *am* thine, save me;
For I have sought thy precepts.
95 (ל) The wicked have waited for me to destroy me:
But I will consider thy testimonies.
96 (ל) I have seen an end of all perfection:
But thy commandment *is* exceeding broad.

MEM.

97 (מ) O how love I thy law!
It *is* my meditation all the day.
98 (מ) Thou *through* thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies:
For they *are* ever with me.
99 (מ) I have more understanding than all my teachers:
For thy testimonies *are* my meditation.

This had revived him (*v.* 93), in this (*v.* 95) he had found consolation when his life was in peril.

94. *sought*] Or, studied. Cp. *v.* 45.

96. The meaning may be, 'I have learnt by experience that all earthly perfection has its limit; but God's commandment is unlimited in extent and value.' The word for 'perfection' (*tiklāh*) however occurs here only, and if its sense is to be determined by that of the most closely cognate word *taklīth*, it would seem to mean rather 'completeness,' the sum of things. The sum of earthly things is limited, Jehovah's law is infinite.

97—104. *Mēm.* The sweetness and profitableness of the study of God's law. This stanza and that of *Shīn* (*vv.* 161 ff.) contain no petition.

97. P.B.V. follows LXX and Vulg. in adding *Lord* to the first clause, where it seems to be wanted.

98. *Thou* through *thy commandments hast made me wiser* &c.] A scarcely possible rendering, though it has some support in the Ancient Versions. Better as R.V., Thy commandments make me wiser &c. For the sense cp. Deut. iv. 6.

for they are *ever with me*] Lit. For it is mine for ever. The use of the singular 'it,' as well as of the singular verb in the preceding line, implies the unity of God's law, though it includes many commandments. This law is his possession. Cp. *v.* 111.

99. *than all my teachers*] Who derive their learning from other sources. Delitzsch thinks that *vv.* 98—100 refer to teachers and elders who, like the Hellenizing Sadducees, were in danger of apostasy through their laxity, and persecuted the strict young zealot for God's law. But clearly

(מ) I understand more than the ancients, 100
Because I keep thy precepts.
(מ) I have refrained my feet from every evil way, 101
That I might keep thy word.
(מ) I have not departed from thy judgments: 102
For thou hast taught me.
(מ) How sweet are thy words unto my taste! 103
Yea, *sweeter* than honey to my mouth!
(מ) Through thy precepts I get understanding: 104
Therefore I hate every false way.

NUN.

(נ) Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, 105
And a light unto my path.
(נ) I have sworn, and I will perform *it*, 106
That *I* will keep thy righteous judgments.

the Psalmist's point is not the superiority of his own stricter interpretation of the law to the laxer interpretation of his teachers, but the superiority of the law to all other sources of instruction as a fountain of wisdom and prudence and discernment.

100. I have more discernment than the aged] It is not official 'elders' who are meant, but those whose long life has given them opportunity to learn by experience.

101. The meaning may be either, that he has studiously avoided all places of temptation in order that he might observe the law, or, that the self-restraint which has marked his conduct has sprung from no lower aim than the desire to obey God.

102. **From thy judgements have I not turned aside;**
For thou thyself hast instructed me.

God Himself has been his teacher, not men: therefore he has been enabled to keep in the path of right. Cp. lxxxvi. 11.

103. Cp. xix. 10; Job xxiii. 12; John iv. 32, 34.

my taste] Lit. *my palate*.

104. The study of God's law gives him the power of discernment to "prove the spirits," and reject all false teaching and laxity of conduct. Cp. *vv.* 29, 128.

105—112. *Nūn.* Knowing the value of God's law as the guide of life the Psalmist is resolved to keep it, whatever may be the risk.

105. Cp. Prov. vi. 23. God's word is a light to guide him safely amid the dangers which beset his path through the darkness of this world. Contrast the fate of the wicked, xxxv. 6.

106. *and I will perform* it] So Jer. *perseverabo*. But LXX, Syr., Targ., agree with the Mass. text in reading, with a slightly different vocalisation, *and have confirmed*, or *ratified it*, or perhaps, *have performed it*.

righteous judgments] Cp. *v.* 7.

107 (ז) I am afflicted very much:
Quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word.
108 (ח) Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD,
And teach me thy judgments.
109 (ט) My soul *is* continually in my hand:
Yet do I not forget thy law.
110 (י) The wicked have laid a snare for me:
Yet I erred not from thy precepts.
111 (כ) Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever:
For they *are* the rejoicing of my heart.
112 (ל) I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes
Alway, *even unto* the end.

SAMECH.

113 (ס) I hate *vain* thoughts:

107. Resolute observance of the law however has exposed him to persecution; therefore he prays God to preserve his life according to His promise. Cp. *v.* 25.

108. *the freewill offerings of my mouth*] The sacrifice of prayer and praise (Heb. xiii. 15); voluntary vows of devotion to the law. Cp. xix. 14.

teach me &c.] Cp. *v.* 12 &c. Vows of obedience are vain without Divine instruction and grace.

109. 'To put one's life in one's hand' is a metaphor for hazarding it (Judg. xii. 3; 1 Sam. xix. 5; xxviii. 21; Job xiii. 14), apparently because a treasure carried in the hand instead of being concealed is liable to be lost or snatched away. The reading of some MSS of the LXX *in thy hands* is doubtless a correction of a phrase which was not understood.

110. An explanation of the preceding verse. His life is threatened by enemies, apparently because of his devotion to the law, but no dangers or persecutions tempt him to indifference or apostasy. Cp. *vv.* 85—87.

yet I erred not] **Yet went I not astray**, as *v.* 176.

111. Israel through its sins had forfeited the land promised to it for an eternal inheritance (Gen. xiii. 15; Ex. xxxii. 13), and never wholly recovered it; but the godly Israelite has an eternal inheritance in the law of which no enemy can deprive him.

the rejoicing of my heart] Cp. Jer. xv. 16.

112. *alway*, even unto *the end*] R.V. **for ever, even unto the end**, rendering *'ôlĕm* as in *v.* 33. Cp. *v.* 44 for the sense. But the meaning may be **eternal** (lit. *for ever*) **is the reward**. Cp. xix. 11. So the LXX, δι' ἀντάμειψιν, *for the sake of recompence*, Jer. *propter aeternam retributionem*.

113—120. *Samech.* The loyalty of the Psalmist and his hope contrasted with the faithlessness of the wicked and their fate.

113. vain *thoughts*] Rather as R.V., **them that are of a double**

But thy law do I love.
(ס) Thou *art* my hiding place and my shield: 114
I hope in thy word.
(ס) Depart from me, ye evildoers: 115
For I will keep the commandments of my God.
(ס) Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may 116
live:
And let me not be ashamed of my hope.
(ס) Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: 117
And I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.
(ס) Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy 118
statutes:
For their deceit *is* falsehood.
(ס) Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth *like* 119
dross:

mind, unstable waverers, half Israelites, half heathen. Cp. 1 Kings xviii. 21; James i. 8.

114. Cp. xxxii. 7; xxviii. 7; *vv.* 74, 81.

115. Cp. vi. 8.

for I will keep...my God] R.V. **that I may keep.** He would be rid of their presence, that they may no longer hinder him from keeping the law, by evil example or even by actual persecution. Significantly he calls God '*my* God,' implying that though they profess to serve Him, He is not really theirs.

116. But in order to keep God's commandments, he needs sustaining grace. Cp. li. 12; iii. 5; xxxvii. 17, 24.

be ashamed of my hope] **Be disappointed** and put to shame by the failure of my hope of deliverance. Cp. *v.* 166.

117. Cp. xviii. 35; xx. 2; xli. 3; xciv. 18.

and I will have respect unto] R.V. **and shall have respect unto.** The Ancient Versions appear to have read *will take delight in*, as in *vv.* 16, 47.

118. *Thou hast trodden down*] Rather, **hast set at nought** (R.V.), or **hast rejected.**

for their deceit is *falsehood*] Not, their crafty schemes are *vain* (R.V. marg.), doomed to be frustrated: but, the principles with which they deceive themselves and mislead others are false and baseless; therefore God rejects them. P.B.V. *for they imagine but deceit* is derived through the Vulg. (*quia iniusta cogitatio eorum*) from the LXX, which with Jer., Theod. and Syr. seems to have read *tar'ithām*, 'their thought,' for *tarmīthām*, 'their deceit.' It is an Aramaic word, but the occurrence of an Aramaic word in so late a Psalm would not be impossible, and it may be the right reading.

119. *Thou puttest away*] God removes the wicked, as the refiner of metals throws away the dross. Cp. Jer. vi. 28—30; Ezek. xxii. 18, 19; Mal. iii. 2, 3. LXX however reads *I reckon*, and Aq., Symm., Jer. *thou*

Therefore I love thy testimonies.
120 (מ) My flesh trembleth for fear of thee;
And I am afraid of thy judgments.

AIN.

121 (ע) I have done judgment and justice:
Leave me not to mine oppressors.
122 (ע) Be surety for thy servant for good:
Let not the proud oppress me.
123 (ע) Mine eyes fail for thy salvation,
And for the word of thy righteousness.
124 (ע) Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy,
And teach me thy statutes.
125 (ע) I *am* thy servant; give me understanding,

reckonest (חשבת for השבת). The former does not suit the next line, but the latter may be the true reading.

therefore I love thy testimonies] That I may avoid their fate: or perhaps, because I see thy righteousness manifested in these judgements. Cp. the next verse.

120. *trembleth for fear of thee*] Shudders for awe of thee, lit. of the hair standing on end with fright: *horrescit.*

thy judgments] Either acts of judgement, punishments inflicted upon the wicked, or the laws and ordinances in accordance with which they are punished. Reverent fear is the right complement of holy love. "The flesh is to be awed by Divine judgements, though the higher and surer part of the soul is strongly and freely tied with the cords of love" (Leighton).

121—128. *Ayin.* It is time for Jehovah to interpose on behalf of His servant, but the faithlessness of men only confirms his love for the law.

121. Conscious of his own rectitude the Psalmist prays that he may not be abandoned to the will of his oppressors. His conduct corresponds to the character of God. Cp. xxxiii. 5; lxxxix. 14.

122. *Be surety for thy servant for good*] "Guarantee Thy servant's welfare" (Kay). Cp. Gen. xliii. 9; Job xvii. 3; Is. xxxviii. 14. P.B.V. *make thou thy servant to delight in that which is good* follows Targ., Syr. and Kimchi, in explaining the verb from the sense which it bears in civ. 34 and elsewhere, but this cannot be the meaning. Coverdale was unfortunately misled by Münster's *dulce fac servo tuo id quod est bonum* to substitute this rendering in the Great Bible of 1539 for the correct rendering which he had given in 1535, "Be thou suertie for thy servant to do him good."

123. Cp. *vv.* 81, 82.

the word of thy righteousness] The promise of deliverance which Jehovah, as a righteous and therefore a faithful God, is pledged to fulfil.

124, 125. The remedy for the despondency of which *v.* 123 speaks. Fuller knowledge of God's law will sustain him under the trial. Cp.

That I may know thy testimonies.
(ע) *It is* time for *thee*, LORD, to work: 126
For they have made void thy law.
(ע) Therefore I love thy commandments 127
Above gold; yea, above fine gold.
(ע) Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts concerning all 128
things to be right;
And I hate every false way.

PE.

(פ) Thy testimonies *are* wonderful: 129
Therefore doth my soul keep them.
(פ) The entrance of thy words giveth light; 130
It giveth understanding unto the simple.

xciv. 12 ff. In both verses he pleads his relation to Jehovah as His servant as the ground of his prayer.

126. It is time for Jehovah to act;
They have broken thy law.

High time it is for Jehovah to interpose with an act of judgement (cp. Jer. xviii. 23, "deal thou with them"), and vindicate His broken law. The second line is decisive in favour of this interpretation: otherwise the first line might be rendered, *It is time to act for Jehovah*, and *vv.* 124, 125 connected with it, in the sense that in such a crisis fresh knowledge is needed.

127. *Therefore*] The more men break God's commandments, the more the Psalmist will love them. Cp. xix. 10. P.B.V. *precious stone* comes through the Vulg. from the LXX.

128. *I esteem all* thy *precepts concerning all* things *to be right*] The Heb. of the Mass. text is most awkward and is almost certainly corrupt. We must read either *I esteem all thy precepts to be right* (Syr., R.V. marg.; cp. P.B.V.), or with LXX (Vulg.), Jer. *according to all thy precepts I direct* my goings (cp. Prov. xi. 5; xv. 21), which gives a good contrast to the following line, with which cp. *vv.* 29, 104.

129—136. *Pē.* The marvellousness of God's law: the Psalmist's prayers that it may be the rule of his life in spite of temptation: his grief at the neglect of it.

129. *wonderful*] Superhuman in their excellence: lit. *wonders*, the term often used of God's revelation of His power in miraculous acts (Ex. xv. 11; Ps. lxxvii. 11, 14; cp. *v.* 18).

therefore &c.] Their sublimity and mystery does not repel but attracts.

130. *The entrance of thy words*] R.V. **the opening of thy words**, the setting forth or unfolding of them. Cp. the use of the cognate verb in xlix. 4. P.B.V. *when thy word goeth forth* follows Luther's earlier rendering *wenn dein Wort ausgehet*.

the simple] Who need instruction to enable them to *discern* between right and wrong. Cp. xix. 7 note; cxvi. 6; Prov. i. 4.

131 (פ) I opened my mouth, and panted:
For I longed for thy commandments.
132 (פ) Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me,
As thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.
133 (פ) Order my steps in thy word:
And let not any iniquity have dominion over me.
134 (פ) Deliver me from the oppression of man:
So will I keep thy precepts.
135 (פ) Make thy face to shine upon thy servant;
And teach me thy statutes.
136 (פ) Rivers of waters run down mine eyes,
Because they keep not thy law.

TZADDI.

137 (צ) Righteous *art* thou, O LORD,

131. *I opened* **wide** *my mouth* for the food of this illuminating informing instruction (Job xxix. 23; Ps. lxxxi. 10), *and panted* in my eagerness to receive it.

132. *Look* &c.] **Turn unto me and be gracious unto me.** So xxv. 16; lxxvi. 16.

as thou usest to do &c.] Better, **as is the right of those that love thy name.** The plea is a bold one, but not too bold. The covenant gives those who love Jehovah's revelation of Himself (v. 11; lxix. 36) the right to claim His grace. Cp. Heb. vi. 10. The word for *right* is *mishpāṭ*, usually rendered *judgement*.

133. *Direct my footsteps*, or, *make my footsteps firm, in* or *by thy word, and* so *let no iniquity have dominion over me*, through stress either of temptation from within, or of trial from without. *Iniquity* or *vanity* is a comprehensive term for sin as moral worthlessness or antagonism to God; it is the very opposite of that law which is truth.

134. Redeem me from the oppression of man,
That I may observe thy precepts.

Cp. *vv.* 121, 122.

135. *Make thy face to shine*] Illuminate the darkness that surrounds me with the light of Thy favour. Cp. xxxi. 16.

and teach &c.] Cp. *v.* 12 &c. He desires the restoration of prosperity not merely for its own sake, but as an opportunity for gaining further knowledge.

136. Mine eyes run down with streams of water] For the phrase cp. Lam. iii. 48; i. 16. The righteous indignation which he feels at one moment for the lawlessness of men (*v.* 53) is tempered at another by profound sorrow and pity.

137—144. *Tsādē.* The righteousness, purity, and truth of God's law command the Psalmist's deepest love and reverence.

137. *Righteous*] This fundamental attribute of the Author of the law necessarily determines its character in all its aspects. Cp. xix. 9.

And upright *are* thy judgments.
(ץ) Thy testimonies *that* thou hast commanded *are* righteous 138
And very faithful.
(ץ) My zeal hath consumed me, 139
Because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.
(ץ) Thy word *is* very pure: 140
Therefore thy servant loveth it.
(ץ) I *am* small and despised: 141
Yet do not I forget thy precepts.
(ץ) Thy righteousness *is* an everlasting righteousness, 142
And thy law *is* the truth.
(ץ) Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: 143
Yet thy commandments *are* my delights.
(ץ) The righteousness of thy testimonies *is* everlasting: 144
Give me understanding, and I shall live.

upright are &c.] R.V. marg. *upright in thy judgements* is a possible but less obvious construction.

138. Thou hast commanded thy testimonies in righteousness And faithfulness to the uttermost.

Cp. *vv.* 86, 90, 144, 151; Deut. iv. 8. God's commandments which bear witness to His Will and man's duty are the expression of His absolute righteousness and of that faithfulness to His covenant which is an inalienable element of that righteousness. Cp. 2 Tim. ii. 13.

139. Cp. lxix. 9.

140. *pure*] Lit. *tried*, or, *refined*: like pure gold without any admixture of dross. Cp. xviii. 30; xii. 6.

141. *small and despised*] Insignificant in the eyes of men (not, as LXX, *young*, νεώτερος), and despised for his strict adherence to the law; but neither the glamour of worldly power nor the sting of worldly contempt can move him from his allegiance.

142. is *the truth*] Is truth. Cp. *vv.* 151, 160; xix. 9; John xvii. 17.

143. *have taken hold on me*] Have befallen me, lit. *found me.*

144. *The righteousness of thy testimonies* is *everlasting*] Righteous (lit. *righteousness*) are thy testimonies for ever, reflecting Thine own eternal righteousness. They are neither imperfect nor temporary. Cp. Matt. v. 17 ff.

give me understanding &c.] He ends this contemplation of the character of God's law with a prayer for fuller understanding of it, for through knowledge of it and obedience to it man really *lives*, truly realises the purpose of his being. Cp. *vv.* 17, 77, 116; Prov. iv. 4, 13; Deut. xxxii. 47.

KOPH.

145 (ק) I cried with *my* whole heart;
Hear me, O LORD: I will keep thy statutes.
146 (ק) I cried unto thee; save me,
And I shall keep thy testimonies.
147 (ק) I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried:
I hoped in thy word.
148 (ק) Mine eyes prevent the *night* watches,
That *I* might meditate in thy word.
149 (ק) Hear my voice according unto thy lovingkindness:
O LORD, quicken me according to thy judgment.
150 (ק) They draw nigh that follow after mischief:
They are far from thy law.

145—152. *Qōph.* Unceasing prayer to be kept faithful in the midst of faithlessness is the rule of the Psalmist's life.

145. I have called with my whole heart; answer me, Jehovah] The perfect tense expresses the habit of his whole life.

146. I have called unto thee; save me,
That I may observe thy testimonies.

147. In the earliest twilight did I cry for help,
(While) I waited with hope for thy words.

Lit. *In the twilight I was beforehand and cried for help.* With *l.* 2 cp. *vv.* 74, 81, 114.

148. *Mine eyes prevent* [or *are beforehand with*, the same word as in *v.* 147] *the* night *watches*] The night was divided into three watches by the Israelites (Lam. ii. 19; Judg. vii. 19; 1 Sam. xi. 11). He compares himself to a sentinel who wakes before it is time for him to go on duty. Possibly, as Baethgen suggests, there is a reference to the author's duties as a Levite. Before the hour when he must rise for his watch in the Temple he is awake, and meditating on God's words. Cp. *v.* 62; lxiii. 6.

149. *according to thy judgment*] Or, *ordinance*; "the gracious rule of action Thou hast laid down for Thyself; Thy method of dealing with those that seek Thee early" (Kay). P.B.V. and R.V. marg. *as thou art wont* take *mishpāṭ* ('judgement') to mean *rule, custom.* Cp. A.V. of *v.* 132. The LXX, Targ. and Jer. support the singular, but if the plural be read, according to the Massoretic vocalisation, as in *v.* 156, the sense will not differ greatly. *Thy judgements* will mean the various examples of God's rule of action which declare His will to preserve the life of His servants.

150, 151. They draw nigh that maliciously persecute me,
That have gone far from thy law.

(ק) Thou *art* near, O LORD; 151
And all thy commandments *are* truth.
(ק) Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old 152
That thou hast founded them for ever.

RESH.

(ר) Consider mine affliction, and deliver me: 153
For I do not forget thy law.
(ר) Plead my cause, and deliver me: 154
Quicken me according to thy word.
(ר) Salvation *is* far from the wicked: 155
For they seek not thy statutes.
(ר) Great *are* thy tender mercies, O LORD: 156
Quicken me according to thy judgments.

Thou art nigh, Jehovah &c.

These two verses are closely connected. When my persecutors draw near to assail me, Thou art near to defend (lxix. 18; xxxiv. 18; Deut. iv. 7); though they have abandoned Thy law, I know the truth of all its commandments, and will not be tempted to join them in apostasy. The reading of LXX, Symm., Syr., Jer., *my persecutors in malice* seems preferable to that of the Mass. text *that follow after malice*. The difference is one of vocalisation only.

152. Of old have I known from thy testimonies, that &c. (R.V.). Men may affirm or act as if they believed that God's laws are obsolete: but from the study of those laws themselves the Psalmist has long ago learnt their eternal validity; and his deeply rooted convictions cannot be shaken by the contempt or the threats of his enemies.

153—160. *Rēsh.* More urgent prayers for deliverance from his persecutors. Note the thrice-repeated 'quicken me.'

153. *Consider mine affliction*] Lit. *see*. It was the prayer of Israel in exile (Lam. i. 9), reminding God of His own words when He was about to deliver His people from Egypt (Ex. iii. 7).

154. *Plead my cause*] The dispute between him and his persecutors is represented as a lawsuit: will not Jehovah be his advocate? Cp. xxxv. 1; xliii. 1; Is. li. 22.

deliver me] **Redeem me, as from bondage.** Cp. Ex. vi. 6; xv. 13; Ps. xix. 14, and the frequent description of Jehovah as Israel's Redeemer from exile in Is. xl—lxvi.

155. *seek not*] Or, **study not.** Cp. *vv.* 45, 94.

156. *Great are thy tender mercies*] **Thy compassions** (*v.* 77). Cp. 2 Sam. xxiv. 14; Neh. ix. 19, 27, 31 (A.V. *thy manifold mercies*); Dan. ix. 18.

quicken me &c.] Cp. *v.* 149*b*.

157 (ר) Many *are* my persecutors and mine enemies;
Yet do I not decline from thy testimonies.
158 (ר) I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved;
Because they kept not thy word.
159 (ר) Consider how I love thy precepts:
Quicken me, O LORD, according to thy lovingkindness.
160 (ר) Thy word *is* true *from* the beginning:
And every one of thy righteous judgments *endureth* for ever.

SCHIN.

161 (ש) Princes have persecuted me without a cause:
But my heart standeth in awe of thy word.
162 (ש) I rejoice at thy word,
As one that findeth great spoil.
163 (ש) I hate and abhor lying:
But thy law do I love.

158. **I have seen the treacherous dealers and felt loathing, Because they have not observed thy word.**
Apostate Israelites are meant, faithless to the covenant. Far from being attracted by them, he felt disgust and loathing (cxxxix. 21) as he watched them and their ways.

159. *Consider how* &c.] Lit. *see that* &c.; or possibly (cp. *v.* 153), *look* upon me, *for I love thy precepts.*

160. **The sum of thy word is truth**, or perhaps, as LXX, Jer., **of thy words**. If he reckons up all God's words of command or promise, their sum total is truth. Cp. John xiv. 6.

161—168. *Shīn* (and *Sīn*). God's law fills the Psalmist's heart with awe, joy, love, and gratitude; he has been diligent in its observance. It is not the boasting of the Pharisee, but the honest profession of a good conscience. This stanza and that of *Mēm* (*vv.* 97 ff.) contain no petition.

161. **His loyalty to the law has not been shaken by the gratuitous hostility of the civil authorities**; rather has he feared to offend God. By *princes* are probably meant Israelite nobles, who exercised judicial and administrative functions. Cp. *v.* 23; Jer. xxvi. 10 ff.; Ezra ix. 1, 2; x. 8, 14; Neh. ix. 32, 34, 38.

thy word] So the *Q'rē*, with Syr., Targ.; R.V. **thy words**, with *K'thībh*, LXX, Jer.

162. Holy awe is not inconsistent with holy joy. Cp. *vv.* 119, 120; Matt. xxviii. 8.

as one &c.] Cp. Is. ix. 3.

163. **I hate falsehood and will abhor it]** *Falsehood* denotes heathenism and heathenish tendencies, in contrast to the *truth* of God's law. Cp. *vv.* 29, 104, 128. The best attested text reads *will abhor.*

(ש) Seven *times* a day do I praise thee 164
Because of thy righteous judgments.
(ש) Great peace have they which love thy law: 165
And nothing *shall* offend them.
(ש) LORD, I have hoped for thy salvation, 166
And done thy commandments.
(ש) My soul hath kept thy testimonies; 167
And *I* love them exceedingly.
(ש) I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: 168
For all my ways *are* before thee.

TAU.

(ת) Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD: 169
Give me understanding according to thy word.

164. *Seven* times *a day*] Not merely morning noon and night (lv. 17), but constantly and repeatedly. Cp. Prov. xxiv. 16; &c.

righteous judgments] Cp. *v.* 7, &c.

165. Those who love the law find it a spring of constant inward peace, even in the midst of outward persecution: and **they have none occasion of stumbling** (R.V.). Cp. 1 John ii. 10, and the LXX here, *οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτοῖς σκάνδαλον*. "They walk firmly and safely on the clear path of duty" without stumbling and falling through sin. Cp. Ezek. xviii. 30, "Repent...and iniquity shall not be a stumblingblock unto you." They are not 'scandalized,' made to stumble and driven into scepticism by the sight of the anomalies of the world, such as suffering goodness and triumphant wickedness. "They are free from the 'stumbling of heart' (1 Sam. xxv. 31)—the paralysing weakness—which follows on the consciousness of having wronged, or of bearing ill-will to, a brother" (Kay). The P.B.V. *and they are not offended at it* appears to be Coverdale's mistaken paraphrase of the Zürich Version, "und werdend sich niemermer stossen."

166*a*. From Gen. xlix. 18, with the substitution of a later word *sibbēr* for *hope* for the sake of the initial letter.

and **have** *done thy commandments*] To the LXX the phrase seemed over-bold, and they substituted *and loved* (cp. *v.* 163). The same feeling may have prompted Coverdale to render "done *after* thy commandments."

167*a*. Cp. 129*b*.

and I love] P.B.V. *and loved* is from LXX through Vulg. So also Jer.

168. With the courage of a good conscience he appeals to God's omniscience in proof of the sincerity of his purpose.

before thee] Cp. for the phrase xxxviii. 9, and for the thought, Heb. iv. 13.

169—176. *Tāv.* Concluding petitions for understanding and deliverance, for the grace of thankfulness, for help and guidance.

169, 170. These verses are closely connected. *My cry* denotes

170 (ת) Let my supplication come before thee:
Deliver me according to thy word.
171 (ת) My lips shall utter praise,
When thou hast taught me thy statutes.
172 (ת) My tongue shall speak of thy word:
For all thy commandments *are* righteousness.
173 (ת) Let thine hand help me;
For I have chosen thy precepts.
174 (ת) I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD;
And thy law *is* my delight.
175 (ת) Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee;
And let thy judgments help me.
176 (ת) I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant;

literally the outward expression of urgent entreaty in a shrill passionate outcry (cp. xvii. 1 note): *my supplication for favour* refers to the substance of his prayer. Once more he prays for fuller understanding or discernment, and for the freedom of outward circumstance which will enable him to use it. As the ground of both prayers he pleads God's word of promise.

171, 172. Let my lips pour forth praise,
Because thou teachest me thy statutes.
Let my tongue sing of thy word,
For all thy commandments are righteousness.

The optative form of the verb in *v.* 172 is in favour of a similar rendering in *v.* 171. He prays for a spirit of joyous, exuberant thankfulness for God's continuous teaching, and for the character of the law which is the substance of that teaching.

173. Let thine hand be ready to help me (R.V.).

for &c.] *v.* 174 is best taken in close connexion with *v.* 173*b*. He pleads three reasons for an answer to his prayers:—he has deliberately resolved to obey God's precepts (cp. *v.* 30; Deut. xxx. 19); he has long been waiting eagerly for deliverance from the hindrances to obedience which surround him (cp. *vv.* 40, 166); his devotion has been no grudging service, but his constant delight (*v.* 24 &c.).

175. *and it shall praise thee*] Or, **that it may praise thee.** The object of the life for which he has prayed so often—life prolonged, revived, invigorated, freed from the persecutions and trials which impede and prevent the exercise of its full activities—is just this, that his whole self may praise God (cxlvi. 2).

and let thy judgments help me] Either the ordinances which are the rule of his life (102, 106), or acts of judgement, by which his enemies are punished.

176. *I have gone astray like a lost sheep*] So apparently the Ancient Versions, but the Massoretic accentuation connects *like a lost sheep* with *seek*, and suggests the rendering, *If I go astray, seek thy*

For I do not forget thy commandments.

servant like a lost sheep; for &c. It need not surprise us if, after all his professions of fidelity and constancy, even including an explicit declaration that in spite of intimidation he had not gone astray from God's commandments (*v.* 110), the Psalmist concludes with a confession of weakness and failure, actual or possible, and acknowledges that he has "erred and strayed from God's ways like a lost sheep"; while at the same moment he pleads as the reason why God should not forsake him that he has not forgotten God's commandments. The confession of failure is not inconsistent with the profession of devotion. As in Ps. xix. 12—14, which may have been in the Psalmist's mind, the thought of the law naturally leads up to the thought of his own frailty and need to be brought back when he wanders. Cp. Is. liii. 6; Ps. xcv. 10. If he has erred, it is a temporary and involuntary aberration: his will and purpose to serve God are unchanged, and he prays that God will not abandon him.

It seems however more in accordance with the general spirit of the Psalm to suppose that the Psalmist is describing his outward circumstances rather than his spiritual state, the helplessness of his condition rather than his moral failures. He is a wanderer in the wilderness of the world; like a sheep that has been separated from the flock he is exposed to constant dangers, and therefore he beseeches God not to leave him to wander alone, but in accordance with His promise (Ezek. xxxiv. 11 ff.) to seek for him, for amid all these dangers he does not forget God's law. So Israel in the Dispersion is compared to a strayed sheep, Jer. l. 6, 17; cp. Is. xxvii. 13.

lost] The word means 'strayed and in danger of perishing.'

PSALM CXX.

The Psalmist begins by recalling his past experience of answered prayer (1): he prays that he may be delivered from the intrigues of unscrupulous enemies and that just retribution may be meted out to them (2—4): and laments that his lot is cast among men who are no better than rude barbarians (5—7).

It is impossible to determine with any certainty the circumstances which called forth the Psalm. Some commentators have thought that the Psalmist speaks on behalf of Israel, and refers to the misrepresentations by which the Samaritans stopped the building of the Temple (Ezra iv. 1—6), or to one of the subsequent occasions upon which they sent false accusations to the Persian court to hinder the rebuilding of the walls (Ezra iv. 7 ff.), or to the opposition to Nehemiah which was headed by Sanballat and Tobiah (Neh. ii. 10, 19; iv. 1, 7 ff.; vi. 1 ff.). But the hostility from which the Psalmist is suffering seems rather to be of a personal nature; and like the author of Ps. cxix he may have been a godly Israelite who (with those likeminded) was persecuted and calumniated by the godless party in the community. We may compare

the thanksgiving of the son of Sirach for his deliverance "from the snare of a slanderous tongue" which had almost proved his ruin (Ecclus. li. 1 ff.), and Baethgen refers to Ps. xii of the "Psalms of Solomon," which closely resembles this Psalm, and, though belonging to a later time, may have sprung out of similar circumstances. Ryle and James suppose that the accuser against whom that Psalm is directed was a Sadducee, who had brought ruin and perhaps death on some prominent Pharisee by laying information against him at the court. A part of the Psalm may be quoted for illustration:

"O Lord, deliver my soul from the lawless and evil man,
From a lawless and whispering tongue, that speaketh false and crafty words with a froward intent.
The words of the evil man's tongue are like fire in a threshing floor kindling the straw thereof.
He sojourneth (?) among men to set houses aflame with a false tongue,
To hew down trees of gladness...and lawlessly with whispering lips to confound houses with strife."

Though our Psalm appears primarily to refer to the sufferings of a pious Israelite among unsympathetic and hostile countrymen, it may easily, as a Pilgrim Psalm, have received a national application to the circumstances of Israel in the Dispersion.

On the title, **A song of ascents** (R.V.), or **A song for the goings up**, prefixed to this and the next fourteen Psalms, see *Introd.* p. xxviii. They are probably taken from a collection of the songs sung by pilgrims as they went up to the Feasts at Jerusalem.

A Song of degrees.

120 In my distress I cried unto the LORD,
And he heard me.
2 Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips,
And from a deceitful tongue.

1. In my distress I called unto Jehovah,
And he answered me.

The Psalmist calls to mind past answers to prayer as an encouragement to fresh prayer in his present distress. Cp. iii. 4. This is a simpler and more natural explanation of the verse than to take it as a confident anticipation of a favourable answer, *I call...and he will surely answer me*; or to suppose that the Psalmist is looking back upon trouble in the past, and that *vv.* 2—4 are the prayer to which he refers in *v.* 1.

2—4. The earnestness of the prayer and the severity of the condemnation point to a person or a party, fomenting feud and strife in the community by calumny and false accusations, and resolutely refusing all attempts to promote harmony.

2. Cp. lii. 1—4; Mic. vi. 12.

What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done 3
unto thee,
Thou false tongue?
Sharp arrows of the mighty, 4
With coals of juniper.
Woe is me, that I sojourn *in* Mesech, 5

3, 4. What should he give thee, and what should he add to thee, thou deceitful tongue? Arrows of a warrior sharpened, with glowing coals of broom. The tongue, or rather its owner, is addressed. God is the subject of the verbs, and the form of expression is suggested by the familiar formula, "So God do to thee and more also" (1 Sam. iii. 17), lit. "So shall God do to thee and so shall he add." Ver. 4 is the answer to the question. The just retribution which is to overtake the deceitful man is described in terms suggested by his offence (cp. vii. 12 ff.). He has shot his arrows of slander or false accusation at the innocent, but a mightier than he, even God Himself, will pierce him with the arrows of His judgement: he has kindled the fire of strife by his falsehoods, but the lightnings of Divine wrath will consume him. For the comparison of the evil tongue to a bow which shoots arrows of falsehood see Jer. ix. 3; Prov. xxvi. 18 f.; cp. too Jer. ix. 8, "Their tongue is a murderous arrow": its power of mischief is described as fire in Prov. xvi. 27 (cp. James iii. 6). Glowing coals are a metaphor for Divine judgements in cxl. 10.

This is the simplest and most natural explanation. Several other explanations have however been proposed, e.g. (1) "What profit will thy false tongue bring thee, O slanderer? It is as sharp arrows" &c., but this seems to lack point. (2) Others suppose that God is addressed and that the tongue is the subject of the sentence: "What profit can the deceitful tongue bring to Thee?"—a sarcastic question, like that in Job x. 3 ff. Can it be that Jehovah tolerates the deceitful man, because thereby He gains some advantage? Ver. 4 will then be an equally sarcastic answer. The gain that accrues from his existence is mischief and strife. But apart from grammatical difficulties, such an idea is unsuited to the context.

coals of juniper] Heb. *rōthem*, broom, from which the Arabs still manufacture charcoal of the finest quality, which makes the hottest fire and retains heat for the longest time.

5—7. The Psalmist laments that he is compelled to live among neighbours who are as hostile as rude barbarians.

5. *I sojourn...I dwell!*] The perfect tenses of the Heb. are rightly translated by the present. The experience is not a thing of the past. He has long dwelt and still must dwell among these uncongenial neighbours. P.B.V. (=Great Bible of 1539) *Woe is me that I am constrained to dwell with Mesech and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar* is from Münster, *Heu mihi quod cum Maesech peregrinari cogor, et habitare cum tabernaculis Kedar.* Coverdale's

That I dwell in the tents of Kedar!
6 My soul hath long dwelt
With him that hateth peace.
7 I *am for* peace: but when I speak, they *are* for war.

earlier version was, *Wo is me, yᵗ my banishmēt endureth so lōge: I dwell in the tabernacles of the soroufull*; derived from the Zürich: "Ach dass mein ellend so lang wäret, ich wonen in den hütten der traurigen."

Meshech, mentioned in Gen. x. 2 as a son of Japheth, was a barbarous people living between the Black Sea and the Caspian, probably the Moschi of Herodotus (iii. 94), and Mushki of the Assyrian inscriptions: *Kedar*, mentioned in Gen. xxv. 13 as the second son of Ishmael, was one of the wild tribes which roamed through the Arabian desert, "whose hand was against every man" (Gen. xvi. 12). Obviously the Psalmist cannot mean to describe himself as actually living among peoples so remote from one another, but applies these typical names of barbarian tribes to his own compatriots, as we might speak of Turks and Tartars.

in the tents] R.V. **among the tents.**

6. Too long hath my soul had her dwelling
With the haters of peace.

The sensitive 'soul' feels the inhumanity of their conduct.

7. Lit. **I am peace**: cp. cix. 4, "I am prayer."

but when I speak &c.] If I so much as speak to them, or perhaps, as P.B.V., "speak unto them thereof," make overtures of friendship, they threaten fiercer hostility.

PSALM CXXI.

This exquisite Psalm, inspired by perfect trust in Jehovah's guardianship of His people, was probably composed to be sung by pilgrims going up to the Feasts at Jerusalem, possibly at the point where they first caught sight of the goal of their journey (*v.* 1). We seem to hear in it the voices of the pilgrims encouraging one another with words of faith and hope, as they journeyed to Jerusalem, once more in the centre of national life and worship to realise the relation of Jehovah to Israel and to each individual Israelite as their guardian in all the vicissitudes of life. Though we cannot determine the precise manner in which it was sung, it is specially adapted for antiphonal singing, and gains in point and vividness if it is divided between different voices. It consists of four pairs of verses. In the first pair of verses, we may conjecture, one of the pilgrims (or a group of pilgrims) expressed his calm trust in Jehovah's help. In the next pair of verses another singer or group of singers responded with words of prayer and assurance; and *vv.* 5—8 may have been sung antiphonally, verse by verse, or in pairs of verses.

A Song of degrees.

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, 121
From whence cometh my help.
My help *cometh* from the LORD, 2
Which made heaven and earth.
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: 3
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.
Behold, he that keepeth Israel 4
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The LORD *is* thy keeper: 5

1. I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains:
From whence shall my help come? (R.V.)

The mountains are not the "mountains of Israel" (Ezek. vi. 2 and often), to which the exile turns his longing eyes, but the mountains upon which Zion is built (lxxxvii. 1; cxxv. 1, 2; cxxxiii. 3), the seat of Jehovah's throne (lxxviii. 68), from which He sends help to His people (iii. 4; xx. 2; cxxxiv. 3). The question of the second line (which cannot be taken as a relative clause) is not one of doubt or despondency, but is simply asked to introduce the answer which follows in *v.* 2. That answer gives a deeper turn to the thought of the question. It is not from the mountains of Zion, but from Jehovah Who has fixed His earthly dwelling-place there that help comes.

2. *Maker of heaven and earth* is a frequent epithet of Jehovah in the later Psalms (cxv. 15; cxxiv. 8; cxxxiv. 3; cxlvi. 6). It is the guarantee of His power to help. It contrasts His omnipotence with the impotence of the heathen gods "that have not made the heavens and the earth" (Jer. x. 11).

3, 4. It is possible to suppose that the speaker of *vv.* 1, 2 addresses himself, but it is more natural to hear in these verses the voice of another speaker, answering the first with words of encouragement.

3. It is maintained by some grammarians that the negative particle *'al* "sometimes expresses merely the subjective feeling and sympathy of the speaker with the act" (Davidson, *Syntax*, § 128, R. 2), and consequently the rendering of the A.V. is retained in the R.V. Ver. 4 will then repeat the 'subjective feeling' of *v.* 3 as a categorical assertion. But here at any rate it is preferable, with R.V. marg., to retain the usual deprecative meaning of *'al*; **May he not suffer thy foot to be moved; may he that keepeth thee not slumber!** and in *v.* 4 the speaker as it were corrects himself, or possibly another speaker chimes in: 'Nay, there is no need for such a prayer, for Israel's keeper never sleeps.' Israel's watchman is not like a human sentinel, liable to be overcome by sleep upon his watch; He is not such as the heathen suppose their gods to be (1 Kings xviii. 27), but unceasing in His vigilance. *He that keepeth Israel* may be an allusion to Gen. xxviii. 15.

5—8. The comforting thought that Jehovah is the guardian of Israel

The LORD *is* thy shade upon thy right hand.
6 The sun shall not smite thee by day,
Nor the moon by night.
7 The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil:
He shall preserve thy soul.
8 The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in
From this time forth, and *even* for evermore.

is developed and appropriated to each individual Israelite. *Vv.* 5, 7 may have been sung by one singer or group of singers, and *vv.* 6, 8 as a response by another singer or group of singers: or perhaps *vv.* 5, 6 by one, and *vv.* 7, 8 by another.

5. *thy shade upon thy right hand*] 'Shade' seems simply to denote 'protection' generally, the idea of the metaphor being lost (xci. 1; Num. xiv. 9); hence it can be joined with "upon thy right hand," that being the usual position of the champion or protector (xvi. 8; cix. 31). The phrase may however be a poetical abbreviation for *Jehovah is thy shade, (he is) on thy right hand.*

6. The metaphor is naturally suggested by 'shade' in *v.* 5. Sunstroke is of course common and dangerous in the East (2 Kings iv. 19; Is. xlix. 10); and the belief in 'moonstroke' was and is widely spread.

7, 8. *shall preserve*] Render, with R.V., **shall keep**, to mark the connexion with the preceding verses.

7. Cp. 1 Thess. v. 23.

8. *thy going out and thy coming in*] All thy undertakings and occupations. Cp. Deut. xxviii. 6; &c. Perhaps too a special allusion to the pilgrims' journey to Jerusalem is intended.

from this time forth, and [omit *even*] *for evermore*] Personal hopes here lose themselves in national hopes: but in the light of the Gospel the individual can appropriate these words to himself. Cp. cxv. 18.

Every pious Jew, as he leaves or enters the house, touches the *Mezuza*, i.e. the small metal cylinder affixed to the right-hand door-post, containing a piece of parchment inscribed with Deut. vi. 4—9, xi. 13—21, and recites this verse. Kitto's *Biblical Cyclopaedia*, s.v. *Mezuza*.

PSALM CXXII.

The home of the author of this Psalm was in the country, at a distance from Jerusalem. He recalls the joy with which he heard the invitation of his neighbours to join the company of pilgrims (Luke ii. 44) going up to one of the great Feasts (*v.* 1). He describes the overwhelming impression made upon his mind by the sight of the city as they halted in its gates (*vv.* 2, 3), and by the recollections of its ancient glories as the religious and civil centre of the national life (*vv.* 4, 5). With a burst of heartfelt enthusiasm he bids men pray and prays himself for its future welfare (*vv.* 6—9).

The Psalm may best be explained thus, as the meditation of a pilgrim

who, after returning to the quiet of his home, reflects upon the happy memories of his pilgrimage. This is the most natural interpretation of the past tenses in *vv.* 1, 2, 'I was glad'...'Our feet were standing.' Many commentators, however, render 'Our feet are standing,' and regard the Psalm as uttered at the moment when the pilgrims have reached their goal.

The Heb. text, with which agree Cod. ℵ of the LXX, Aq. and Symm., adds *of David* to the title: but it is omitted by other MSS of the LXX, by the Targ., and by Jer. The addition may have been suggested by *v.* 5; but the Psalm cannot have been written by David, for the Temple is standing, and the opening words are clearly those of one who has to travel to it from a distance; nor even in the time of the monarchy, for *vv.* 4, 5 appear to look back across the Exile to a distant past. Most probably it belongs to the time of Nehemiah, when the walls had been rebuilt, and means taken to provide the city with an adequate population. *Vv.* 6 ff. may perhaps be explained from Neh. xi. 1 ff.[1]

A Song of degrees of David.

I was glad when they said unto me, 122
Let us go *into* the house of the LORD.
Our feet shall stand 2
Within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

1. The Psalmist recalls his joy when his neighbours summoned him to join in the pilgrimage to the sanctuary.

I was glad] The A.V. rightly follows the Ancient Versions in translating the verb as a past.

Let us go into &c.] Rather, **We will go to the house of Jehovah.** Cp. Is. ii. 3.

2—4. The arrival of the pilgrims, and the impression produced by the sight of the city.

2. *Our feet shall stand*] The verb cannot be rendered thus. It may mean 'have been and still are standing,' hence R.V. *are standing*; or **were standing**, which is the most natural rendering. The somewhat unusual combination of the participle with the substantive verb may be an indication of the lateness of the Psalm (the idiom is common in Nehemiah), but it gives prominence to the idea of duration (Driver, *Tenses*, § 135. 5). It suggests that when the pilgrims reached the city gates, they halted for a while, spell-bound by the sight of its magnificence, and by the memories of its ancient glories.

[1] The use of the relative שֶׁ (*sh*) in this Psalm (*vv.* 3, 4) and in cxxiv. 1, 2, 6; cxxix. 6, 7; cxxxiii. 2, 3; cxxxv. 2, 8, 10; cxxxvi. 23; cxxxvii. 8, 9; cxliv. 15; cxlvi. 3, 5, points to a late date, though "our imperfect knowledge of the history and usage of שֶׁ" makes the argument an uncertain one (see Driver, *Lit. of O. T.*[6] p. 450): and the use of the participle and verb substantive as in *v.* 2 ('were standing'=עֹמְדוֹת הָיוּ), though not unknown in the earlier stages of the language, becomes common in later books, and is characteristic of Nehemiah.

3 Jerusalem *is* builded
As a city that is compact together:
4 Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD,
Unto the testimony of Israel,
To give thanks unto the name of the LORD.
5 For there are set thrones of judgment,
The thrones of the house of David.

3. The exclamation of the pilgrims. **Jerusalem that art built up as a city which is compacted together**, lit. *joined together for itself*. This is generally understood to refer to the restoration of the city: the walls have been rebuilt, the ruined houses repaired, the gaps and vacant spaces filled up; the city once more presents an aspect of unity, continuity, solidity, widely different from the dilapidated condition in which Nehemiah found it (Neh. ii. 17; vii. 4). But the verb is used metaphorically as well as literally (e.g. xciv. 20), and it is possible that the sight of the restored city is to the poet's eye an emblem of the mutual harmony of its inhabitants or of the unity of the nation. Such a sense is suggested by Coverdale's beautiful rendering *that is at unity with itself*, which seems to be a paraphrase of the Vulg. *cuius participatio eius in idipsum*, LXX ἧς ἡ μετοχὴ αὐτῆς ἐπιτοαυτό, 'whose fellowship is together.' This rendering however presumes a slightly different reading of the text.

The Targ. interprets the words of the heavenly Jerusalem—'Jerusalem which is built in the firmament like a city that is united together upon earth.'

4. **Whither the tribes went up, (even) the tribes of Jah,**
(As) a testimony for Israel,
To give thanks to the name of Jehovah.

The perfect tense might denote "custom in the past continuing into the present" and so be rendered *go up*, but it is more natural to take it as referring to the ancient custom of the days before the Exile. The poet idealises the past and forgets the division of the nation. The practice of pilgrimage to the Temple at Jerusalem is called a *testimony*, i.e. a law or institution which bore witness to Israel's relation to Jehovah as His people. Cp. lxxxi. 4, 5; Ex. xxiii. 17; Deut. xvi. 16.

5. **For there were set** (lit. *sat*) **thrones for judgement**] For *throne* cp. ix. 4, 7. The poet is still looking back to the times before the Exile. Jerusalem was the centre of the nation's civil life as well as of its religious life. Reference is made to a supreme tribunal at Jerusalem in Deut. xvii. 8 ff.

the thrones of the house of David] The king appears to have been assisted in his judicial functions by members of the royal family. Cp. Jer. xxi. 11, 12. If the verb in the preceding line is taken as a present (*are set*), 'thrones of the house of David' must mean tribunals exercising a jurisdiction corresponding to that of the royal family in ancient times.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 6
They shall prosper that love thee.
Peace be within thy walls, 7
And prosperity within thy palaces.
For my brethren and companions' sakes, 8

6—9. The recollection of the past glories of Jerusalem leads the Psalmist to pray and bid others pray for her future welfare. A new era of hope seems to be opening before her.

6. *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem*] This is probably the right rendering; but the phrase might also be rendered *Inquire for the welfare of J.*, greet or salute her, the customary salutation being "Is it well (lit. peace) with thee?" or "Peace be unto thee." Cp. Jer. xv. 5. The rendering of the LXX, "Ask now for Jerusalem the things which belong unto peace," contains the phrase (*τὰ εἰς εἰρήνην*) used by our Lord as He entered Jerusalem (Luke xix. 42, *τὰ πρὸς εἰρήνην*). May not the whole Psalm have been in His mind at the moment, as Ps. cxxxvii appears to have been (*v.* 44, *ἐδαφιοῦσίν σε καὶ τὰ τέκνα σου ἐν σοί*), suggesting a pathetic contrast between the peace which might have been her lot, and the doom of her enemies which she was blindly dragging down upon herself?

they shall prosper] Better, may they prosper (R.V. marg.).

that love thee] The reading *may thy tents prosper* (cf. cxviii. 15), found in one MS, but in no Ancient Version, is at first sight attractive. But the prayer for the prosperity of those who love Jerusalem follows naturally on the invitation to them to pray for her welfare. Contrast the anathema on those who hate Zion in cxxix. 5. The expression may have been suggested by Lam. i. 5, "her enemies prosper." The words for *lover* and *enemy* in Heb. differ by one letter only (אֹהֵב—אוֹיֵב).

7. *walls...palaces*] The same words are found in xlviii. 13. *Chēl* denotes the outer wall or rampart: *armōn* includes all conspicuous buildings, such as forts and towers as well as palaces.

There is an assonance between the words for 'peace' (*shālōm*) and 'prosperity' (*shalvāh*) and the name Jerusalem. Whether the name of the city is etymologically connected with the root SHLM is doubtful; but the sound of the name suggests the words for peace and prosperity, and the Psalmist prays that the *nomen* may be an *omen*, and that Jerusalem may enjoy the peace of which her name is an augury.

8. *For my brethren and companions' sakes*] Not, for the sake of the nation in general, though doubtless the welfare of the nation was dependent on the welfare of the metropolis: but for the sake of those dwelling in Jerusalem, to whom he feels himself attached in the bonds of closest fellowship. There may be a reference to the circumstances described in Neh. xi. 1 ff. Some difficulty was found in securing a sufficient population for the city: ten per cent. of the country people were chosen by lot to come into the city; and others volunteered to reside there. "And the people blessed all the men that willingly offered themselves to dwell in Jerusalem."

I will now say, Peace *be* within thee.
9 Because of the house of the LORD our God
I will seek thy good.

I will now say] **Let me now say, Peace** &c.: or more probably, **Let me now speak peace concerning thee**, i.e. pray for thy welfare.

9. **For the sake** *of the house* &c.] Dear as Jerusalem is to him as the centre of the nation's civil life, it is yet dearer as the centre of the national religion.

I will (**Let me**) *seek thy good*] So Neh. ii. 10, "a man to seek the good of the children of Israel."

PSALM CXXIII.

This touching Psalm is an utterance of unfaltering faith and patience in the face of contemptuous scorn and mockery. The Psalmist speaks in *v.* 1 in the singular as a leader or representative of the people, and passes naturally into the plural in *vv.* 2 ff. as he joins all the members of the suffering community with himself in faith and prayer. The Psalm may have been written about the time of Nehemiah's first visit to Jerusalem. It was a report of the miserable plight of the remnant of the returned exiles which induced him to go there (Neh. i. 3); and he speaks repeatedly of the contempt and scorn with which the Samaritans and the heathen neighbours of the Jews viewed his efforts for the restoration of the city, until the success of those efforts provoked them to measures of active hostility. See Neh. ii. 19; iv. 1—4, 7 ff. The simile of *v.* 2 may naturally be connected with a phrase characteristic of the narrative of that period, *the hand* or *the good hand, of our God*. Cp. Ezra vii. 6, 9, 28; viii. 18, 22, 31; Neh. ii. 8, 18.

Von Gerlach, quoted by Kay, well observes, "To enter fully into the temper of mind exhibited in the Psalms of this period we must consider what the expectations of the restored Jews were. They looked for the coming in of Messianic glories;—and here they were a laughing-stock to the Samaritans. What a school of patience and high-toned spiritual hope was this!" Comp. introd. to Ps. cxxxi.

A Song of degrees.

123 Unto thee lift I up mine eyes,
O thou that dwellest in the heavens.

1, 2. The eye of hope upturned to Jehovah.

1. *lift I up*] Lit. *have I lifted up*; I have long been and still am looking to Jehovah for the help which He alone can give. Cp. cxxi. 1; xxv. 15.

O thou that dwellest in the heavens] Rather, **O thou that sittest throned in heaven** (cp. ii. 4), as the supreme King and Governor of the world. Cp. the frequent use of the phrase 'God of heaven' in Ezra and Nehemiah.

Behold, as the eyes of servants *look* unto the hand of 2
their masters,
And as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her
mistress;
So our eyes *wait* upon the LORD our God,
Until that he have mercy upon us.
Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us: 3
For we are exceedingly filled *with* contempt.
Our soul is exceedingly filled 4
With the scorning of those that are at ease,
And with the contempt of the proud.

2. Behold, as the eyes of servants (look) unto the hand of their masters,
As the eyes of a maid (look) unto the hand of her mistress,
So our eyes (look) unto Jehovah our God, until he be gracious unto us.

As the servants or slaves of a household are dependent on the master and mistress of the household and look to them for the supply of all their needs, so Israel which is Jehovah's household acknowledges its dependence on Him, and looks to Him to relieve its present distress. "The hand is the symbol of power, which rules the whole house" (Cheyne). This explanation is preferable to that which supposes the point of the comparison to lie in the intentness with which slaves watch for the slightest gesture of command from their master; or that which regards the hand as the hand of chastisement, and the look as the look of entreaty, appealing to the angry master to desist. With the last line cp. Is. xxx. 18.

3, 4. The plea of suffering Israel, scorned and despised by its insolent neighbours.

3. *Have mercy upon us*] **Be gracious unto us.**

for we are exceedingly filled with *contempt*] Contumely has been as it were the daily food with which we have been crammed to loathing. Cp. Lam. iii. 15, 30; Ps. lxxx. 5.

4. *Our soul is exceedingly filled*] The close resemblance of this clause to cxx. 6 *a* in the use of a rare form of the adverb (*rabbath*), and of the reflexive pronoun (lit. 'filled *for itself*'), may indicate that both Psalms were written by the same author.

scorning] Or, *jeers*. The cognate verb is used in Neh. ii. 19; iv. 1, "they jeered at us"..." they jeered at the Jews."

those that are at ease] Those who live in careless confident security, regardless alike of the judgements of God and the sufferings of men. Cp. Job xii. 5; Am. vi. 1; Zech. i. 15.

the proud] So the *K'thībh*: according to the *Q'rē* the consonants are to be read as two words, *the proudest oppressors*.

PSALM CXXIV.

This spirited Psalm of thanksgiving was evidently written while the impression of escape from some imminent danger which had threatened the community was still fresh. It is commonly supposed to be the thanksgiving of the returned exiles for deliverance from the Babylonian captivity. No less event, it is urged, could have evoked such strong emotion. But the language of the Psalm points rather to some sudden danger which had been providentially averted, than to a blow which had actually fallen. Israel's enemies had threatened them: and if Jehovah had not fought for them, Israel might easily have been annihilated. But He had not suffered the wild beast to seize its victim; He had broken the snare, and baulked the fowler of his prey. Such a danger menaced the restored community when Nehemiah was rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. The contempt described in Ps. cxxiii was succeeded by hostility. "When Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem went forward, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth; and they conspired all of them together to come and fight against Jerusalem, and to cause confusion therein. But we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them." Sanballat and his allies, failing to take the Jews by surprise, apparently did not actually attack them. But for the moment the danger was serious; Nehemiah evidently felt that the community had had a narrow escape, and that if God Himself had not frustrated the plot, there would have been a fatal catastrophe. The Psalm then may best be regarded as a thanksgiving for the deliverance recorded in Neh. iv. 7—23, the whole of which passage should be studied in connexion with it. Cp. also Neh. vi. 16.

Vv. 1, 2 are a double protasis, and *vv.* 3—5 a triple apodosis:—If Jehovah had not fought for us, we should have been annihilated. *Vv.* 6—8 are a thanksgiving for the deliverance, and a profession of trust.

As in Ps. cxxii, the Heb. text, with Cod. ℵ of the LXX, and the Targ., reads *of David* in the title. The addition may have been suggested by phrases resembling those of Davidic Psalms, but the language points to a late date, and it can hardly be regarded even as an adaptation of an ancient poem.

A Song of degrees of David.

24 If *it had* not *been* the LORD who was on our side,
Now may Israel say;

1—5. Unless Jehovah had taken our part, we should have been destroyed by our enemies.

1. **If it had not been Jehovah that was for us,**
Let Israel now say.

Cp. Jacob's words in Gen. xxxi. 42; Neh. iv. 20, "our God shall

If *it had* not *been* the LORD who was on our side,
When men rose up against us:
Then they had swallowed us up quick,
When their wrath was kindled against us:
Then the waters had overwhelmed us,
The stream had gone over our soul:
Then the proud waters
Had gone over our soul.
Blessed *be* the LORD,
Who hath not given us *as* a prey to their teeth.
Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers:
The snare is broken, and we are escaped.
Our help *is* in the name of the LORD,
Who made heaven and earth.

fight for us"; and Ps. xciv. 17; lvi. 9; cxviii. 6. The structure of the first two verses resembles that of cxxix. 1, 2.

2. *men*] Rather **man**; as contrasted with God Who was our help. Cp. lxvi. 12; lvi. 11; cxviii. 6.

rose up] Conspiring to fight against us, Neh. iv. 8. Cp. iii. 1; liv. 3.

3. **Then had they swallowed us up alive**, as the earth swallowed Korah (Num. xvi. 30); or as Sheol devours its victims (Prov. i. 12), or a monster its prey (Jer. li. 34). Cp. Ps. lv. 15; Lam. ii. 16.

when their wrath &c.] Cp. Neh. iv. 1: Sanballat "was wroth and exceedingly vexed," iv. 7 "they were exceedingly wroth."

4. For the figure cp. xviii. 16; lxix. 1, 2, 15; Is. viii. 7, 8; Lam. iii. 54.

the stream] The **torrent**, suddenly swollen by a storm. Cp. Judg. v. 21.

had gone over our soul] Overwhelmed us and put an end to our existence.

5. *the proud waters*] Cp. the "proud waves" of the sea in Job xxxviii. 11: here the epithet is especially suitable, as suggesting the insolence of the enemy.

6—8. Thanksgiving and confidence for the future.

6. *a prey to their teeth*] For the figure cp. vii. 2.

7. The timorous defenceless bird is an apt emblem for weak helpless men. Cp. xi. 1. By 'snare' (*pach*) is probably meant a kind of clap-net. The frame breaks or the spring fails to act, so that the bird is not captured, or else escapes. See the illustration in Driver's *Joel and Amos*, p. 157.

we are escaped] *We* is emphatic. *We*, who seemed certain to become the prey of our enemies. But God "frustrated (lit. *broke*, though the word is a different one) their counsel" (Neh. iv. 15).

8. Cp. cxxi. 2.

PSALM CXXV.

The confidence of Jehovah's faithful people is unshakable, and His guardianship of them unceasing: He will not suffer them to be the victims of oppression longer than they can bear it (1—3). A prayer for the loyal-hearted, and a solemn warning of the fate of disloyal renegades, conclude the Psalm (4, 5). This Psalm may with great probability be dated a little later in Nehemiah's life than the preceding Psalm. The walls of Jerusalem, it may be supposed, have been successfully restored; Jehovah has given His people an assurance that the tyranny which had dismantled Jerusalem, and almost crushed the life out of the little community of returned exiles (see Neh. i. 3 and Ryle's note) shall not be perpetual: loyal-hearted Israelites have everything to hope; but the disloyal party, which was still endeavouring to thwart Nehemiah's efforts, and was in secret correspondence with Tobiah, will eventually meet the fate which it deserves. The whole of Neh. vi should be studied in connexion with this Psalm.

A Song of degrees.

125 They that trust in the LORD *shall be* as mount Zion,
Which cannot be removed, *but* abideth for ever.
2 *As* the mountains *are* round about Jerusalem,
So the LORD *is* round about his people

1—3. The confidence of true Israelites in Jehovah, and Jehovah's protecting care for His people.

1. Mountains in general, as the most solid part of the solid earth, were to the Israelite the symbol of all that was immovable and unchangeable (xciii. 1 &c.; Is. liv. 10). Mount Zion is here named in particular, partly because the Psalm concerns the inhabitants of Jerusalem, partly because it was so intimately connected with an irrevocable Divine purpose (Is. xiv. 32; xxviii. 16). It is the confidence of Israel, rather than its prosperity, which is as firm as the rock of Zion. No storms of trial can shake it.

shall be] Supply rather, *are*.

which *cannot be removed*] **Which shall not be shaken.** Cp. the metaphorical use of the word in xvi. 8; cxii. 6, 7, &c.

2. "All around Jerusalem are higher hills: on the east, the Mount of Olives; on the south, the Hill of Evil Counsel, so called, rising directly from the Vale of Hinnom; on the west the ground rises gently ...while on the north, a bend of the ridge connected with the Mount of Olives bounds the prospect at the distance of more than a mile." Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, I. 259. This girdle of mountains is an ever-present symbol to the dweller in Jerusalem of Jehovah's guardianship of His people. Cp. Zech. ii. 5, "I will be unto her a wall of fire round about."

From henceforth even for ever.
For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of 3
the righteous;
Lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.
Do good, O LORD, unto *those that be* good, 4
And to *them that are* upright in their hearts.
As for such as turn aside *unto* their crooked ways, 5
The LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of
iniquity:
But peace *shall be* upon Israel.

3. *For* &c.] We might rather have expected an inference from *v.* 2, *Therefore*: but the connexion of thought is that the confidence of *vv.* 1, 2 is justified, *for* **the sceptre of wickedness** *shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous.* Israel will not always be unjustly oppressed. The sceptre is the symbol of rule (Is. xiv. 5). *The lot of the righteous* is the land of promise, so called with allusion to its division by lot (Josh. xviii. 10, 11). Israel is called 'righteous' in contrast to the heathen, in virtue of its calling (Hab. i. 13; Is. xxvi. 2; i. 26). The 'sceptre of wickedness' does not refer simply to the fact that Israel was subject to Persian rule, but to the injuries done them by the Samaritans and others with the sanction of the Persian power, resulting in the disastrous condition of things which Nehemiah had found on his arrival. See Ezra iv. 23.

The A.V. and P.B.V. follow the LXX in rendering *the wicked*, but the Heb. text reads *wickedness*. The difference is one of vowel points only.

lest the righteous &c.] Prolonged oppression might tempt Israelites in despair to deny their allegiance to Jehovah and their duty to their country, and make common cause with the enemies of their religion and nation. Cp. xxxvii. 7, 8; lxxiii. 10 ff.

4, 5. A prayer for the faithful and a warning to renegades.

4. *Do good*] We are reminded of Nehemiah's prayer, v. 19; xiii. 31. *The good and the upright in their hearts* are the loyal, honest, straightforward Israelites. The variation from the usual phrase "upright of heart" emphasises their thorough sincerity.

5. **But** *as for such as turn aside* &c.] Renegades who forsake the straight course of duty to their God and country for tortuous courses of intrigue with enemies: the disloyal party in Jerusalem, some of whom, like Shemaiah, took bribes from Sanballat and Tobiah to entrap Nehemiah, while others kept up a treasonable correspondence with them. See Neh. vi. 12, 13, 17.

shall lead them **away**] To share the judgement of those whose hostility to Israel they have chosen to abet. Cp. Matt. xxv. 41.

but *peace* shall be *upon Israel*] Better as a separate sentence, a concluding prayer or benediction: **Peace be upon Israel** (R.V.). Cp. cxxii. 6, 7, 8; cxxviii. 6; Num. vi. 26; and Gal. vi. 16, "Peace be...

upon the Israel of God." The preceding words "as many as shall walk by this rule" suggest that St Paul may have had this passage in mind. "In these words the Psalmist gathers up all his hopes and prayers and wishes, as it were stretching out his hands over Israel in priestly benediction. Peace is the end of tyranny, hostility, division, disquiet, alarm: peace is freedom and harmony and security and blessedness" (Delitzsch).

PSALM CXXVI.

The restoration of Israel from exile in Babylon was a marvel so astonishing that it could hardly be credited. It was the occasion for the most joyous thanksgiving, and even the heathen recognised the greatness of Jehovah's favour to His people (1—3). But the sequel had been disappointing; and the restored community had need to pray that Jehovah would carry on and complete the work which He had begun. Faith however could not doubt that seed sown in tears would produce a joyful harvest (4—6).

All that can be said with certainty as regards the date of the Psalm is that it belongs to the post-exilic period. It may have been written in the midst of the troubles which hindered the rebuilding of the Temple in the first twenty years after the Return. But more probably it belongs, like the preceding Psalms, to the early part of the Ezra-Nehemiah period, when the sense of failure and disappointment had sunk more deeply into the heart of the people, and the contrast between the glowing promises of the prophets and the actual condition of the weak community in Palestine had become a permanent trial of faith, while at the same time the dawn of happier days appeared to be at hand. The impression produced by *vv.* 1—3 is that the jubilant rejoicing of the Restoration lies in a somewhat remote past. The use of the first person plural in *vv.* 1—3 is no objection to this view. It does not necessarily imply that the Psalmist and his contemporaries took part in the First Return. Their vivid sense of the continuity of national life would enable Israel of the time of Ezra readily to identify itself with Israel of the time of Zerubbabel.

The elegiac rhythm of the Psalm is well marked.

The general thought of the Psalm resembles that of Ps. lxxxv, with which it should be compared and contrasted.

A Song of degrees.

126 When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion,

1—3. Israel's rejoicing at the incredible marvel of restoration to its own land.

1. *turned again the captivity of Zion*] No doubt the restoration from exile in Babylon is meant, whether the literal meaning of the phrase is *to bring back the captivity*, or *to turn the fortunes*, i.e. restore the prosperity, of Zion. See note on liii. 6; and cp. xiv. 7; lxxxv. 1;

We were like them that dream.
Then was our mouth filled *with* laughter,
And our tongue *with* singing:
Then said they among the heathen,
The LORD hath done great things for them.
The LORD hath done great things for us;
Whereof we are glad.
Turn again our captivity, O LORD,
As the streams in the south.

Hos. vi. 11; Am. ix. 14. The substantive here however differs in form from that used elsewhere, and if the variation is intentional and not merely a scribe's error, the meaning may be, *When Jehovah brought back those that returned to Zion* (R.V. marg.).

we were like them that dream] We could hardly believe that the deliverance was a reality, and not an illusion which would vanish like a dream. Cp. Is. xxix. 8; Luke xxiv. 41; Acts xii. 9.

Polybius and Livy use similar language to describe the joy and astonishment of the Greeks when, after the conquest of Macedonia by T. Quinctius Flamininus in B.C. 196, the freedom of Greece was proclaimed at the Isthmian games. "None could believe that he had really heard aright; men looked at one another in astonishment as if it was the empty illusion of a dream; distrusting the testimony of his own ears, each began to question his neighbour." Livy XXXIII. 32; cp. Pol. XVIII. 29. 7.

2. *Then was our mouth filled* with *laughter*] Cp. Job viii. 21.

singing] Or, *shouts of joy*, a word characteristic of the second Isaiah (xliv. 23; xlviii. 20; xlix. 13; li. 11; liv. 1; lv. 12). The Psalms of the Return (xciii—c) were the expression of this joy.

then said they among **the nations**] Even heathen nations recognised the marvel of Israel's deliverance. Cf. Is. lii. 10; Ps. xcviii. 2, &c.

hath done great things for them] Cp. Joel ii. 21, and with the preceding line cp. *v.* 17.

3. The community appropriates the words of the nations, and recalls the joy of that wonderful time: **Jehovah did great things for us: we were glad.**

4—6. Prayer for fuller blessing, and the expression of confident faith that efforts however feeble must bear fruit. These verses evidently imply a background of disappointed hopes and anxious struggles.

4. *Turn again our captivity*] Or, **Restore our fortunes.**

as the streams in the **South**] The *Negeb*, or 'South' country, literally 'the *dry* region,' was the arid waterless district to the south of Judah (Judg. i. 15), where in summer all the brooks dry up, and are only filled by the autumn rains. Thus far the restoration of Israel has been only as it were a scanty thread of water trickling among the stones, but as in the due season Jehovah refills those stony stream-beds with abundance of sparkling rushing water, so He can re-animate the feeble community

5 They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.
6 He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed,
Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his
sheaves *with him.*

of Israel with fresh and vigorous life, and multiply its scanty numbers into the crowds which the prophet's vision saw streaming to Jerusalem (Is. xlix. 18).

5. The efforts of the returned exiles to re-establish the nation had been carried on in the midst of hindrances and disappointments, anxieties and fears; but the Psalmist cannot doubt that they will in due time bear fruit. "So is it ever in God's kingdom. Precisely those undertakings, which at first seemed hopeless and were begun under pressing troubles, end in achieving the greatest good" (Von Gerlach, quoted by Kay). The tears shed at the Foundation of the Second Temple (Ezra iii. 12), and the rejoicings at its completion (Ezra vi. 16, 22), and at the Dedication of the Walls (Neh. xii. 27, 43) were only illustrations of the general truth. Cp. Matt. v. 4.

in joy] **With shouts of joy,** the same word as that for *singing* in *v.* 2. There is naturally an allusion to the rejoicings of harvest (Is. ix. 3 &c.).

6. Though one goeth weeping on his way, when he carrieth forth the seed to sow,
He shall surely come with shouts of joy, when he carrieth home his sheaves.

The subject in both clauses may most naturally though not necessarily be taken to be the same: at any rate the thought that "one soweth and another reapeth" (John iv. 36, 38) is not prominent here.

precious seed] This has been explained to mean 'costly' on account of the scarcity of corn, with reference to the bad seasons from which the community suffered after the Return (Haggai i. 10 f.; Ps. lxxxv. 12); but the rendering cannot be maintained. The cognate verb in Amos ix. 13 means to 'draw out' or 'trail' the seed: and the substantive here means the seed which is trailed or cast into the ground, seed for sowing.

PSALM CXXVII.

Man's labour is vain without God's blessing; and His blessing comes to those whom He loves they know not how (1, 2). A numerous family of sons is one of His special blessings: it secures for the father influence and respect (3—5). The point in the first half of the Psalm is man's dependence upon God; in the second half it is the advantage of a family: and the looseness of the connexion together with the difference of rhythm has suggested to some commentators that two originally independent Psalms have been joined together. They would hardly be shorter than Pss. cxxxiii, cxxxiv, both of which begin, like *v.* 3, with 'Behold.' The conjecture however seems to be unnecessary: in view of the importance attaching to the family in oriental countries, it is not unnatural that the Psalmist should enlarge upon its advantages, though he is led away thereby from the point with which he started.

The exhortation to trustful dependence upon God and the warning against corroding anxiety are needed in all ages: but it is not unlikely that the language of the Psalm was suggested by the circumstances of Nehemiah's time. The houses in Jerusalem needed to be rebuilt (Neh. vii. 4): let it be done in a spirit different from the irreligious selfishness of those who first returned from Babylon (Haggai i. 4). The city had to be carefully guarded (Neh. vii. 3; iv. 9 ff.): let it not be forgotten that precautions were futile without the blessing of Israel's Watchman. The population of Jerusalem was scanty (Neh. vii. 4), and the promises of the prophets (Jer. xxx. 19, 20; Zech. ii. 1 ff.; viii. 4 ff.) had not yet been fulfilled; but God could supply this need, and those to whom He granted the privilege of numerous offspring might congratulate themselves on this mark of His favour.

To the title *A song of ascents* the Heb. text, followed by Cod. R of LXX, Aq., Symm., Jer., Targ., adds **of** *Solomon*. The addition may have been suggested by the supposition that the *house* in *v.* 1 meant the Temple, and that *his beloved* in *v.* 2 was an allusion to Solomon's name *Jedidiah*, 'beloved of Jah' (2 Sam. xii. 25). The language of the Psalm moreover has some affinities with that of Proverbs.

The Psalm is appointed for use in the office for the Thanksgiving of Women after Child-birth.

A Song of degrees for Solomon.

127 Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it:
Except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh *but* in vain.
2 *It is* vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late,
To eat the bread of sorrows:

1, 2. The futility of human effort without the Divine blessing.

1. The industry of the builder, the vigilance of the watchman, are in vain without Jehovah's cooperation. A man may build a house and never live in it (Deut. xxviii. 30; Zeph. i. 13); the watchman may patrol the city, or keep his watch on the wall, but he cannot secure it from dangers such as fire or the assault of enemies. *The house* is not the Temple, nor is *the city* specifically Jerusalem: house-building and city-guarding are examples of ordinary human undertakings. But as the examples may have been suggested (see above) by the circumstances of the time, they may well have a further figurative application to those circumstances. Without the blessing of Him Who has promised to build the house of Israel (Am. ix. 11; Jer. xxxi. 28) and Who is the Watchman of His people (cxxi. 4), the most strenuous efforts of the leaders of the community can avail nothing.

the watchman] Lit. *the keeper*, as in cxxi. 4, 5.

2. Vain is it for you, O ye that rise up early and sit down late, Eating the bread of toil.

For so he giveth his beloved sleep.
3 Lo, children *are* an heritage of the LORD:

Anxious toilers are addressed. 'Uprising' and 'downsitting,' as in cxxxix. 2, denote activity and rest. Men may begin their labours early, and continue them late; they may win their subsistence by a succession of unremitting labours (the word is plural), and lose all enjoyment of it through constant anxiety; but all this self-tormenting care is needless. For 'toil' cp. Prov. v. 10 (*thy labours* = the results of thy toil); Prov. x. 22 (R.V. marg.); Gen. iii. 16 (*sorrow*), 17 (R.V. *toil*).

for *so he giveth his beloved sleep*] Omit *for*. This is the natural rendering of the Heb. text, but the sense of it is not obvious. Perhaps it may be, 'Bethink yourselves! *so*, even while you toil and moil with sleepless energy (Eccl. viii. 16), Jehovah gives calm rest to those whom He loves.' So Keble,

"Still on the favoured of His eyes
He bids sweet slumber freely wait."

Compare Mrs Browning's beautiful poem on the words.

Most commentators however adopt the rendering, *So he giveth unto his beloved* in sleep. While Jehovah's people rest in calm dependence upon Him, He gives them all for which others toil with wearying anxiety[1] (Mk. iv. 26, 27).

his beloved] The singular may be collective, *His beloved ones*, or individualising, *each of His beloved ones*. The epithet applied to Israel (lx. 5; Deut. xxxiii. 12; Jer. xi. 15) is transferred to each faithful Israelite who responds with unwavering confidence to the love which has chosen him.

It is hardly necessary to say that no sanction of idleness or depreciation of industry is here expressed or implied. What the Psalmist rebukes is the anxious spirit of those who toil restlessly as though they could ensure success by their own efforts, forgetting that God's blessing is needed to prosper those efforts, and that He is ever ready to give that blessing to those who trust Him. It is the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, Matt. vi. 25—34. Cp. 1 Pet. v. 7; Ps. xxxiii. 16 ff.; lx. 11 ff.; cxlvii. 10, 11; Prov. xxi. 31: and in particular Prov. x. 22, "The blessing of Jehovah, it maketh rich, and He addeth no toil therewith."

3—5. All blessings are God's gift, but especially the blessing of a numerous family. In dilating upon its advantages the Psalmist passes away from the primary theme of the Psalm.

3. **Lo, sons are an inheritance from Jehovah;**

[1] This rendering is certainly not the natural rendering of the Heb. text. Wellhausen condemns it as "quite inadmissible." It requires the supplement of an object to the verb, and שֵׁנָא must be taken as accus. of manner. If it were not for the exegetical difficulty, no one would hesitate to take 'sleep,' as the Ancient Versions take it, as the object of the verb 'giveth.' Some word however seems to be needed to correspond to the results of anxious toil, and though the Ancient Versions already had the present reading, the text may be corrupt. The anomalous form of the word for *sleep* (שֵׁנָא for יְשֵׁנָה) may point in this direction.

And the fruit of the womb *is his* reward.
As arrows *are* in the hand of a mighty *man;*
So *are* children of the youth.
Happy *is* the man that hath his quiver full of them:
They shall not be ashamed,
But they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

The fruit of the womb is a reward.

As He bestowed upon Israel the possession of Canaan (Ex. xv. 17; Deut. iv. 21), not as an hereditary right, but of His own free-will, in accordance with His promise, so of His free gift and grace does He bestow the blessing of numerous children. The P.B.V. well expresses the sense, "Lo, children and the fruit of the womb are an heritage and gift that cometh of the Lord." If the thought of recompence is included at all in 'reward,' it is, in accordance with the spirit of *vv.* 1, 2, as a recompence for the fear of God (cp. cxxviii) that children are given, not, as the Targum glosses, introducing the later Jewish doctrine of merit, as a reward for good works.

the fruit of the womb] A more general expression including daughters. Cp. cxxxii. 11; Gen. xxx. 2; Deut. vii. 13.

4. *children of the youth*] **The sons of youth**; sons born while their parents are young and vigorous (Gen. xlix. 3; contrast 'the son of his old age,' Gen. xxxvii. 3), not only as being themselves more vigorous, but because they grow up in time to be the defence and succour of their parents' old age. The figure of the arrows in the hand of the warrior was a natural one when the restoration of the state had to be carried on in face of opposition from within and from without.

5. *his quiver*] The figure of the preceding verse is continued.

they] i.e. the fathers of such numerous families.

but they shall speak &c.] Rather, **when they speak with enemies in the gate.** The open space by the city gate was the place where justice was administered and the citizens met for business or social intercourse (Deut. xxi. 19; Ps. lxix. 12). 'Speak' may be used in the technical sense of 'pleading a cause' (Josh. xx. 4), or in a general sense; and the meaning will be that a man with a stalwart family to support him runs no risk of being wronged by powerful enemies through the maladministration of justice, as was too commonly the case (Job v. 4, and the prophets *passim*): or that in ordinary business and intercourse he will meet with respect as a man of influence and consideration. This explanation is preferable to that which supposes the reference to be to war. In that case 'speak' must denote the 'parley' which might take place before the assault on a town. When the enemy demands the surrender of the town, it may boldly defy its assailants if it is well manned by a numerous population.

Professor Bevan suggests that the allusion may be to 'boasting-matches' like the *Mufāchara* of the Arabs. Before a battle the champion of the tribe would step in front of the ranks, and proclaim to the enemy the nobility and prowess of his tribe. Even in times of peace it was a common occurrence in Arab society for poets to engage in such

rivalries, and sometimes they led to fierce and bloody tribal feuds. In such contests the strength of a family would naturally form an important element. See Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, I. 54 ff.

PSALM CXXVIII.

Prosperity and domestic happiness will be the lot of him who fears Jehovah and obeys His laws (1—3). Such a man may hope to see Jerusalem prospering, and to leave a numerous posterity to succeed him (4—6).

This Psalm is a companion-piece to Ps. cxxvii, and like it, was probably intended to encourage the members of the community of the Restoration at a time when there was much to dishearten. The scanty population of Jerusalem, and the constant alarms of attack, presented a perplexing contrast to the prophetic promises of peace and plenty and a numerous population (Jer. xxx. 18 ff.; xxxi; Zech. viii. 1—17); but the Psalm teaches that the welfare of the state depends upon virtuous family life, and virtuous family life must be founded upon active religious principle. If Israel, family by family, will fear Jehovah, it shall realise the promises of the law and the prophets. Cp. cxliv. 12—15; and for glimpses of the enjoyment of such idyllic happiness from time to time in the troubled life of Israel after the Restoration see Ecclus. l. 22—24; 1 Macc. xiv. 4—15.

Luther calls this Psalm an Epithalamium or Marriage Song, and its appropriateness for use in the Marriage Service is obvious.

A Song of degrees.

128 Blessed *is* every one that feareth the LORD;
That walketh in his ways.
2 For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands:
Happy *shalt* thou *be*, and *it shall be* well with thee.
3 Thy wife *shall be* as a fruitful vine

1—3. Domestic happiness the reward of godliness.

1. *Blessed*] **Happy**, as in *v.* 2. Cp. cxii. 1; cxix. 1—3.

that walketh in his ways] In whom religious principle bears the fruit of right conduct. Cp. Prov. viii. 32; Job xxviii. 28.

2. A personal application of the general principle of *v.* 1, addressed to any God-fearing father of a family.

For thou shalt eat &c.] Or, **The labour of thine hands shalt thou surely eat.** His industry will not be baffled by bad seasons or other drawbacks, but will produce good results (Hagg. i. 11; ii. 17), and instead of their being carried off by enemies he will enjoy them himself. Cp. Is. lxv. 21, 22: and contrast the warnings of Lev. xxvi. 16; Deut. xxviii. 30 ff.; Am. v. 11; Mic. vi. 15; Job xxxi. 8.

3. *as a fruitful vine*] The fruitfulness, gracefulness, and precious-

By the sides of thine house:
Thy children like olive plants
Round about thy table.
Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth 4
the LORD.
The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion: 5
And thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem
All the days of thy life.
Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, 6
And peace upon Israel.

ness of the vine are obvious points of comparison: its dependence and need of support may also be alluded to.

by the sides of thine house] Rather, **in the innermost chambers of thy house** (Jer. *in penetralibus domus tuae*), to be connected with *thy wife*, as in the next line *round about thy table* obviously belongs to *thy children*. The women's apartments were at the back of the tent or house, furthest from the entrance.

thy **sons** *like olive plants*] The picture is that of the young olive trees springing up round the parent stem, fresh and full of promise. Cp. Thomson, *Land and Book*, p. 57. The evergreen olive is an emblem of vitality and vigour (lii. 8; Jer. xi. 16, &c.).

round about thy table] Cp. 1 Sam. xvi. 11, "We will not sit *round* till he come hither."

4—6. Prayers and hopes for the welfare of the community.

4. *Behold, that thus* &c.] **Lo, surely thus** &c. Cp. cxxvii. 3.

5. *The* LORD *shall bless thee*] It is possible to render thus, and to take the imperatives in the next two lines (lit. *and see thou*) as equivalent to emphatic futures (cp. Gen. xii. 2): but it is preferable to render, **Jehovah bless thee...that thou mayest see the welfare of Jerusalem ...yea, see thy sons' sons.** See Driver, *Tenses*, § 65.

out of Zion] Where He sits enthroned as King. Cp. cxxxiv. 3; xiv. 7; xx. 2.

6. May he live to a good old age and see his family perpetuated in his grandchildren. Cp. Prov. xvii. 6, and contrast the curse, Ps. cix. 13.

and *peace upon Israel*] Though the construction of the A.V. is possible, it is better to take these words, as in cxxv. 5, as a separate clause, **Peace be upon Israel.**

PSALM CXXIX.

Israel's chequered history supplies a ground of hope in a time of anxiety. Often as it has been oppressed by enemies, Jehovah has not suffered it to succumb entirely (1—4). And now once more the malignant foes of Zion shall perish before they have matured their plots against her (5—8).

The Psalm corresponds in length, style, and the general tenor of its contents, to Ps. cxxiv. Israel is introduced as the speaker in both ('Let Israel say'): the figure of rhetorical repetition is employed in the first two verses of both: in both Israel is face to face with malicious enemies, but confident of Jehovah's protection. They may well have been written by the same poet in the same period, with reference to the dangers which threatened the community in the time of Nehemiah.

A Song of degrees.

129 Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth,
May Israel now say:
2 Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth:
Yet they have not prevailed against me.
3 The plowers plowed upon my back:
They made long their furrows.
4 The LORD *is* righteous:

1—4. Throughout its history Israel has been harassed by enemies, but in His faithfulness Jehovah has preserved His people from destruction.

1. **Much have they vexed me from my youth up, let Israel now say.**

The history of Israel is often compared to the life of an individual. Israel's life began in Egypt. Cp. Hos. ii. 3, 15; xi. 1; Jer. ii. 2; &c. From the Egyptian bondage onward it has repeatedly been oppressed by enemies. For *let Israel say*, i.e. let Israel thankfully recall the lessons of its history, cp. cxviii. 2; cxxiv. 1.

2. *yet they have not prevailed against me*] Cp. 2 Cor. iv. 8—10.

3. **Plowers have plowed** *upon my back*] A bold metaphor for cruel maltreatment. Israel is imagined as thrown prostrate upon its face, while the remorseless foe drives the plough up and down over it, brutally lacerating its back. Cp. the similar figure in Is. li. 23. The use of the metaphor may have been facilitated by the common identification of the people with the land, and it may be intended to suggest the thought of the slave's back torn and furrowed by the lash (Is. l. 6). We are reminded also of Micah iii. 12, and of the story that a plough was driven over the site of the Temple by Terentius Rufus after the capture of Jerusalem by Titus, and again by Hadrian after the suppression of Bar Cocheba's revolt.

they made long their furrows] According to Delitzsch, the word means more exactly *the strip of land which is ploughed at one time*, but the meaning will be the same: they did their cruel work thoroughly and spared nothing.

4. *The* LORD is *righteous: he* &c.] Better, **Jehovah the righteous hath cut asunder.** The same attribute of righteousness which compels Him to punish (Neh. ix. 33) binds Him to deliver, for it involves faithfulness to His covenant. Cp. li. 14 note; Is. xlv. 21.

He hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.

Let them all be confounded and turned back 5
That hate Zion.
Let them be as the grass upon the housetops, 6
Which withereth afore it groweth up:
Where*with* the mower filleth not his hand; 7
Nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.

cords] The word usually denotes the straps or bands by which the yoke was fastened on to the neck of the ox (Job xxxix. 10). If the metaphor of the preceding verse is continued, the meaning is that the plower's harness is broken so that they can no longer continue their work. But the figure may be changed; Israel may be the ox, and the cords those which fasten the yoke of servitude upon its neck. Or 'cords' may be used generally as a figure for subjection. Cp. ii. 3. The reference is to the deliverance of Israel from successive oppressions, but especially to the great deliverance from the captivity in Babylon, and to the escape which is the theme of Ps. cxxiv.

5—8. The enemies of Zion shall be destroyed before their malicious schemes are matured.

5. Put to shame and turned backward
Shall be all that hate Zion.

It is difficult to decide whether these words are a prayer, as most Versions and commentators render them; or an expression of faith, that Israel's enemies will be foiled and repulsed in the present crisis as they were in the past. On the whole the latter explanation seems best. Cp. vi. 10. *The haters of Zion* were such as Sanballat and Tobiah, who "were grieved exceedingly" when Nehemiah came "to seek the welfare of the children of Israel" (Neh. ii. 10), and all who joined them in endeavouring to prevent the restoration of Jerusalem.

6. *as the grass upon the housetops*] Cp. Is. xxxvii. 27. Grass or corn springs up quickly on the flat roofs of oriental houses, but having no depth of soil (Matt. xiii. 5 f.) it withers prematurely away, and yields no joyous harvest.

afore it groweth up] Lit. *before it has unsheathed*, put out its flower-stalk and given promise of fruit. So let Zion's enemies perish before they can mature their plots. The rendering of P.B.V., *afore it be plucked up*, is that of some MSS of the LXX, and the Vulg. ('priusquam evellatur'), but though possible, is less suitable.

7, 8. An expansion of the simile (cp. cxxvii. 4, 5).

7. *mower*] Reaper (R.V.). The 'grass' includes corn springing from grains accidentally dropped on the roof.

bosom] The 'lap' or loose fold of the garment, which could be used for collecting the ears of corn. Cp. Neh. v. 13. Children were carried in it (Is. xlix. 22).

8 Neither do they which go by say,
The blessing of the LORD *be* upon you:
We bless you in the name of the LORD.

8. *The blessing of Jehovah be upon you* is the friendly greeting of the passers-by to the reapers at their work: *we bless you in the name of Jehovah* may be simply an emphatic repetition of the greeting (cp. cxviii. 26): or it may be, as the Targ. takes it, inserting *and they do not answer them*, the reapers' reply. For this kindly custom cp. Ruth ii. 4, "Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee."

The fate of Zion's enemies will be the opposite of her lot as foretold by the prophet, "Yet again shall they use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I turn their fortunes, Jehovah bless thee, O habitation of righteousness, O mountain of holiness" (Jer. xxxi. 23).

PSALM CXXX.

Israel is suffering the punishment of its sins, and humbly the Psalmist confesses that if Jehovah takes strict account of those sins, Israel's case is desperate. But Jehovah has revealed Himself as a pardoning God, in order to gain man's devotion (1—4). Therefore he can wait in patient but eager expectation, and he bids Israel wait, in confidence that the day of redemption will come at last (5—8).

Many commentators think that *vv.* 7, 8 stamp the Psalm as the prayer not of an individual but of the congregation: but the exhortation to the people in those verses does not necessarily imply that the speaker in *vv.* 1—6 is Israel personified; in fact it rather tends to distinguish the speaker from Israel. At the same time "the depths" out of which the Psalmist calls are mainly if not wholly national not personal sufferings. The sense of national guilt weighed heavily on the hearts of men like Nehemiah, whose prayer (Neh. i. 4—11) is closely akin to this Psalm, and the Psalm may best be understood as the prayer of a representative godly Israelite, such as Nehemiah.

This Psalm is earlier than the Book of Chronicles, for the Chronicler in his addition to Solomon's prayer (2 Chr. vi. 40—42) combines *v.* 2 with cxxxii. 8, 9, 16, 10*b*, 1. It might have been written in the Exile, but more probably it belongs to the time of Nehemiah. It has noticeable points of contact with the confession in Neh. ix, as well as with Neh. i. 4—11. It should also be compared with Ps. lxxxvi.

It is one of the four Psalms which Luther called 'Pauline Psalms' (xxxii, li, cxxx, cxliii); and as one of the seven Psalms known from ancient times in the Christian Church as 'the Penitential Psalms,' it is appointed as a Proper Psalm for Ash Wednesday.

A Song of degrees.

130 Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD.

1—4. A cry of penitence from the depths of trouble to the God of pardon.

1. *Out of the depths*] Deep waters are a common figure for distress

Lord, hear my voice:
Let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. 2
If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, 3
O Lord, who shall stand?
But *there is* forgiveness with thee, 4
That thou mayest be feared.

and danger. Cp. lxix. 1, 2, 14. It is not merely personal suffering that is meant, but national suffering, the burden of which the Psalmist feels intensely. Israel is in a danger of being overwhelmed by a sea of trouble.

have I called] He has long been praying and still continues to pray.

2. *let thine ears be attentive*] Cp. 2 Chron. vi. 40; vii. 15; Neh. i. 7, 11. Penitent Israel can plead for the audience which sin made impossible (Is. lix. 1, 2).

the voice &c.] Cp. xxviii. 2.

3. *If thou, Jah, shouldest mark iniquities*] Shouldest observe them and keep them in remembrance, instead of blotting them out of Thy record. Cp. lxxix. 8. The same word is used of God's 'observing' the sinner (Job x. 14; cp. xiv. 16, 17), and of 'keeping' anger (Jer. iii. 5; cp. Ps. ciii. 9). The P.B.V., "If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss," is one of Coverdale's boldly beautiful paraphrases.

Lord] *Adōnai*, as in *v.* 2, implies that the servant is addressing his Master.

who would *stand*] Before Thee in judgement. No one could maintain his innocence: all must inevitably be condemned as guilty at the bar of Divine justice. Cp. i. 5; lxxvi. 7; cxliii. 2; Ezra ix. 15. This verse is virtually a confession of sin and a plea for pardon.

4. *But* there is *forgiveness with thee*] The Heb. conjunction, which literally means *for* (so P.B.V.), gives the reason for the truth implied in the preceding verse: 'Thou dost not remember iniquities, for with thee is forgiveness'; and so it may be rendered *But* or *Nay but*. The word for *forgiveness* occurs again only in Neh. ix. 17; Dan. ix. 9 (in plur.): the adj. *forgiving* in lxxxvi. 5. Cp. 1 John ii. 1, 2.

that thou mayest be feared] God forgives in order that men may fear Him. Man might dread a stern unforgiving God, but he could not fear Him with that devout reverence which is the animating spirit of Old Testament religion (Deut. v. 29), and which still finds its place in the New Testament as an element in the relation of man to God (1 Pet. i. 17). Cp. the plea for pardon in lxxix. 9, "for thy name's sake," and 1 Kings viii. 39, 40; Rom. ii. 4.

Most of the Ancient Versions misunderstood this clause, and connected it with the next verse. Thus the LXX, "For thy name's sake have I waited for thee," or according to the reading of some MSS (probably taken from Theodotion) followed by the Vulg., "For thy law's sake." Jer. "since thou art to be feared."

5 I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait,
And in his word do I hope.
6 My soul *waiteth* for the Lord
More than they that watch for the morning:
I say, more than they that watch for the morning.

7 Let Israel hope in the LORD:
For with the LORD *there is* mercy,
And with him *is* plenteous redemption.

5—8. In this confidence that Jehovah is a God of forgiveness the Psalmist can wait with patience and hope, and bid Israel wait, for the redemption that will surely come.

5. *I wait...my soul doth wait...do I hope*] The perfect tense of the original denotes what long has been, as well as what still is, the attitude of the Psalmist's mind.

in his word] Of promise (cxix. 74, 81) to pardon and deliver: e.g. such prophecies as those in Jer. xxxi. 31—34; xxxiii. 8; &c.

6. My soul (looketh) for the Lord,
More than watchmen (look) for the morning,
(Yea, more than) watchmen for the morning (R.V.).

More anxiously than the watchman longs for the dawn which is to release him from his duty does the devout Israelite long for the end of the night of trouble and the dawn of a happier day. The repetition of *watchmen for the morning* gives a touch of pathetic earnestness. Most commentators suppose that military sentinels are meant by *watchmen*; but the Targum renders, "My soul waits for Jehovah, more than the keepers of the morning-watch which they keep in order to offer the morning sacrifice," understanding the allusion to be to the custom that one of the Levites who kept the night watch in the Temple was appointed to watch for the moment of the dawn, at which the daily sacrifice was to be offered. This explanation adds point to the comparison, for the Levites were watching with eager expectation for a dawn which would bring not merely release from toil but positive blessing, in the renewed assurance of God's covenant mercy.

The P.B.V. *before the morning watch, I say, before the morning watch*, is derived from Münster's *ante custodes matutinos, ante custodes, inquam, matutinos.* Coverdale's original rendering, *frō the one mornynge to the other*, was taken from the Zürich Version, "von einer morgenwacht zur anderen."

7. Hope, Israel, in Jehovah,
For with Jehovah is lovingkindness.

The Psalmist exhorts the people, or if the preceding verses are taken as the words of the congregation, Israel exhorts itself, to wait in hope. Cp. cxxxi. 3.

plenteous redemption] Or, *redemption in abundance*, manifold ways and means of effecting Israel's deliverance, according to the abundance of His lovingkindness and compassion. Observe how the thought that

And he shall redeem Israel
From all his iniquities. 8

God's manifold mercy and patience have not been exhausted by Israel's persistent rebellion runs through the confession in Neh. ix; *vv.* 17, 19, 27, 28, 30, 31, 35. Cp. Is. xliii. 25; lv. 7.

8. HE is emphatic. He Who possesses this infinite love and wisdom and power will deliver Israel from all his iniquities and from the calamities which are the punishment of those iniquities. Cp. xxv. 22.

PSALM CXXXI.

The Psalmist has learned the spirit of child-like humility in the school of suffering. His is not a naturally unambitious soul, but he has disciplined all worldly ambitions, and calmly and contentedly resigned himself to the Will of God.

Many commentators think that Israel is the speaker; but it is more natural to regard the Psalm as the utterance of a pious Israelite, representing the best spirit of the community of the Restoration, and renouncing on behalf of himself and those like-minded all thoughts of worldly aggrandisement for Israel. The Psalm belongs in all probability to the same period as the preceding Psalm. The prophets had seemed to promise great and wonderful triumphs for Israel in the Restoration, and what was the actual condition of Israel? Did it not demand the sternest self-discipline alike for the individual and for the community to enable them to fling away ambition, and accept, with cheerful faith, the lowly, despised position, which was so different from the glowing pictures of Jeremiah and the later Isaiah? It is "a humility not natural to Israel, but born of penitence," and so the Psalm is a fitting sequel to Ps. cxxx. It is one element which this period had to contribute to the formation of the Christian character. Cp. Matt. xviii. 3; James iv. 6; 1 Pet. v. 5.

The title *of David* is found not only in the Massoretic text, but in the LXX (ℵAR), Aq., Symm., Syr., though wanting in some MSS of the LXX, and in the Targ. Probably it was added because the Psalm was thought to illustrate the spirit of David's life (see especially 2 Sam. vi. 21 f.), but there can be little doubt that the Psalm belongs to the same period as the Psalms among which it stands.

A Song of degrees of David.

LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: 131
Neither do I exercise myself in great *matters*, or in *things*
too high for me.

1. A proud mind finds expression in haughty looks and ambitious schemes. Cp. Ps. xviii. 27; ci. 5; Prov. xvi. 5.

neither &c.] **Neither do I busy myself** (lit. *go to and fro*) **in great things, or in things too arduous for me.** Cp. the warning to Baruch

2 Surely I have behaved and quieted myself,
As a child that is weaned of his mother:
My soul *is even* as a weaned child.
3 Let Israel hope in the LORD
From henceforth and for ever.

in Jer. xlv. 5, and for the word rendered *wonderful* or *arduous* cp. Gen. xviii. 14; Deut. xxx. 11. The Psalmist has schooled himself to renounce ambitious schemes which are impracticable, and to accept the *rôle* of insignificance. This appears to be the primary meaning here, rather than 'mysteries too deep for my comprehension' (Job xlii. 3). Ecclus. iii. 18 ff. is an expansion of this verse.

2. Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul:
Like a weaned child on its mother's breast,
Like a weaned child is my soul upon me.

He has *calmed* (lit. *levelled*, Is. xxviii. 25, of levelling ground for sowing) his soul, and *silenced* it (lxii. 1, 5; Lam. iii. 26). It is no longer disturbed by the storms of passion and the clamours of ambition. As the child that has gone through the troublesome process of weaning can lie happily and contentedly in its mother's arms without fretting or craving for the breast, so the Psalmist's soul, weaned from worldly ambition, can lie still without murmuring or repining. It is not the helplessness of the child—children in the East were sometimes not weaned till the age of three, 2 Macc. vii. 27, cp. note on 1 Sam. i. 23, 24—but its contentment in spite of the loss of what once seemed indispensable, that is the point of the comparison.

The same preposition which is used of the child in its mother's arms, lit. *upon its mother*, is used of the soul's relation to the Psalmist, *upon me*. The soul in Hebrew psychology was sometimes distinguished from a man's whole 'self,' and regarded as acting upon it or related to it from without. Cp. xlii. 4, 5, 6, 11; cxlii. 3; &c. See Delitzsch, *Biblical Psychology* (E.T.) pp. 179 ff.

3. Hope, Israel, in Jehovah,
From this time forth and for evermore.

In this spirit of resignation and contentment let Israel patiently wait for the development of God's purposes. Cp. cxxx. 7.

PSALM CXXXII.

Israel had been restored from exile. The Temple had been rebuilt. Jehovah had returned to dwell in Zion according to His promise. But was His other promise of an eternal dominion to the house of David to be annulled? Was David's zeal in establishing the worship of Jehovah in Jerusalem to be forgotten? Were the prayers and hopes of that memorable occasion to be doomed to final disappointment? Surely it could not be. Such seem to have been the circumstances under which this Psalm was written, and the thoughts to which it was designed to give expression. It is a prayer of the congregation, thrown with a

singular boldness of poetic imagination into a vividly dramatic form. It consists of two main divisions, (i) the prayer of the congregation that Jehovah will remember David, (1) reciting his oath, and (2) describing the cooperation of the people with him; and (ii) the answer to the prayer.

i. (1) The congregation prays Jehovah to remember the pains which David took to prepare Him a sanctuary in Zion (1, 2); and recites his resolution in the words which he might be supposed to have used on the occasion (3—5).

(2) David's people are introduced as speakers, describing the enthusiasm with which they joined in his plan for bringing the Ark to Zion (6, 7), and praying that Jehovah will take possession of His sanctuary, and bless people, priests, and the royal house (8—10).

ii. The answer to the congregation's prayer is a recital of Jehovah's oath to David (11, 12). That oath is grounded on Jehovah's choice of Zion as His earthly abode (13). He declares His purpose to bless her people and her priests, and to restore the fortunes of the house of David (14—18).

The abruptness of the transitions has led some commentators to suggest that fragments of an older poem are incorporated in the Psalm; but the homogeneousness of its style militates against such a theory, and if once the dramatic principle of the Psalm, expressing ideas not by narrative but by the direct speech of those concerned, is grasped, the difficulties disappear.

The Psalm then is an encouragement to Israel of the Restoration to believe that Jehovah will not fail to perform His promises to the house of David. Those promises rested upon the choice of Zion as Jehovah's earthly abode. The Restoration had proved that Jehovah had not abandoned Jerusalem; it was a pledge that He would not leave His promise to David unfulfilled. The re-establishment of the worship which David founded in Jerusalem would be incomplete without the fulfilment of those promises. The Psalm is then a truly Messianic Psalm. It looks forward boldly to that fulfilment of the promises to David which was realised in Christ, and reaffirms the hope of Israel at a time when nothing but the strongest faith in the immutability of a Divine promise could have ventured to do so. Such an expression of Messianic hopes was most natural for the pilgrims going up to Jerusalem for the Feasts, and recalling all the memories connected with the "city of David."

To what period of the post-exilic period the Psalm belongs is doubtful. It is certainly earlier than Chronicles, for the Chronicler's addition to Solomon's prayer (2 Chron. vi. 40—42) is a free reproduction of cxxx. 2, cxxxii. 8, 9, 16, 10*b*, 1, with a reminiscence of Is. lv. 3. Some commentators have referred it to the age of Zerubbabel, and have even supposed that he is referred to in *v.* 10. But more probably it belongs, like most of the Psalms of Ascent, to the age of Nehemiah. It is at any rate noteworthy how strongly men's thoughts turned back to David as the originator of the Temple ritual and worship, at the time when the services of the Temple were being reorganised by Nehemiah. See Neh. xii. 24, 36, 45, 46.

Some have thought that the language of the Psalm implies the exist-

ence of the monarchy, and that it may have been written in the time of David or Solomon, for the Translation of the Ark or the Dedication of the Temple. But the prayer that David should be 'remembered' implies that his work lay in a distant past; and the language of the Psalm points rather to a time when the great promises to David seemed to have been forgotten. In many respects it resembles Ps. lxxxix, with which it should be carefully compared; but while the historical background of Ps. lxxxix is evidently the Exile, without one ray of hope in the immediate present, Ps. cxxxii breathes a spirit of hopefulness which presumes the Restoration and the re-establishment of the Temple worship.

Ps. cxxxii differs from the other Psalms of Ascent not only in length, but in rhythm. We miss the rhetorical repetition and the elegiac measure which mark so many of them. On the other hand the introduction of different speakers, though more boldly employed here, is found in cxxiv, cxxix.

As a Messianic Psalm it is fitly appointed for use on Christmas Day.

A Song of degrees.

132 LORD, remember David,
And all his afflictions:
2 How he sware unto the LORD,
And vowed unto the mighty *God* of Jacob;

1—5. A prayer that Jehovah will remember David's zeal in bringing the Ark to Jerusalem.

1. *LORD, remember David* &c.] A possible rendering (cp. cxxxvi. 23); but better, **Jehovah, remember for David all the trouble he underwent**: lit. *all his being afflicted*; all the pains and trouble and anxiety he underwent in his lifetime for the cause of God, and especially in establishing a sanctuary in Jerusalem, and in making preparation for the building of the Temple. Cp. 1 Chron. xxii. 14, "Behold, *in my affliction* I have prepared for the house of Jehovah" &c. The Psalmist pleads David's services in establishing the worship of Jehovah in Jerusalem as a reason why Jehovah should remember the promises made to him. For similar pleas cp. Ex. xxxii. 13; Deut. ix. 27; Lev. xxvi. 42, 45. "The Davidic covenant was to Ezra or Nehemiah what the Abrahamic was to Moses—the focus from which the rays of Divine comfort emanated. Cp. Mic. vii. 20" (Kay). This simple and natural reference to the services of great leaders was developed in later Jewish theology into an elaborate doctrine of the merits of the fathers. See Weber, *System der altsynag. Theol.* pp. 280 ff. The form of expression is a favourite one with Nehemiah (v. 19; xiii. 14, 22, 31).

2. *How he sware*] Or, **Who sware**: a poetical mode of expressing the earnestness of his resolution. There is no mention of any oath or vow in the historical narrative. The fact of the translation of the Ark to Zion is recorded in 2 Sam. vi, David's desire to build a Temple in 2 Sam. vii.

the **Mighty One** *of Jacob*] Cp. *v.* 5. This title, derived from Gen.

Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, 3
Nor go up into my bed;
I will not give sleep to mine eyes, 4
Or slumber to mine eyelids,
Until I find out a place for the LORD, 5
A habitation for the mighty *God* of Jacob.
Lo, we heard *of* it at Ephratah: 6
We found it in the fields of the wood.

xlix. 24, is a reminder that it was to Jehovah that David owed his victories (2 Sam. v. 12; vii. 1). It is used in Is. xlix. 26; lx. 16; cp. Is. i. 24.

3—5. David's oath not to rest till he had found a resting-place for the Ark after all its wanderings in form of course is poetical hyperbole.

3. *the tabernacle of my house...my bed*] Lit. *the tent of my house... the couch of my bed.*

4. A proverbial expression. Cp. Prov. vi. 4. The addition in P.B.V. "I will not suffer mine eyes to sleep, nor mine eyelids to slumber, *neither the temples of my head to take any rest*" comes through the Vulg. from the LXX, where it is a second rendering of the preceding words, added from the version of Theodotion.

5. *a place*] Cp. 1 Chron. xv. 1.

a habitation &c.] **A dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob**, where His presence might 'dwell' among His people (Ex. xxv. 8, 9). The word for *dwelling place*, or *tabernacle*, is in the 'amplificative' plural, expressing the dignity of the house of Jehovah. Cp. xliii. 3; lxxxiv. 1.

6—10. The enthusiasm of Israel at the establishment of the sanctuary in Jerusalem (6, 7); their prayer that Jehovah will deign to occupy it, and will bless priests, people, and king (8—10).

6. The abruptness of the transition is at first sight perplexing; but instead of giving a prosaic account of the transportation of the Ark to Zion, the Psalmist introduces the people of David's time as speakers, proclaiming the eagerness and joy with which they welcomed David's proposal, and their resolve to worship Jehovah in His new sanctuary. The removal of the Ark was a national movement. See 2 Sam. vi. 2, 15; 1 Chron. xiii. 1 ff., xv. 28.

It may best be explained to mean *the Ark*, as the great object which the poet has in mind, though it is not actually mentioned till *v.* 8. It might mean *the tidings* or *the plan*, but this sense does not suit the verb *found*, nor is it easy to connect it with the designations of place.

But what is meant by *we heard of it* **in Ephrathah**, *we found it in the* **fields of the forest?** (1) Elsewhere *Ephrathah* is a name for *Bethlehem* (Gen. xxxv. 16, 19; xlviii. 7; Ruth iv. 11: cp. Micah v. 2; 1 Sam. xvii. 12). But the Ark never had any connexion with Bethlehem. To refer *we* to David, and to explain, 'I heard of it while I was still in my home in

7 We will go into his tabernacles:
We will worship at his footstool.
8 Arise, O LORD, into thy rest;
Thou, and the ark of thy strength.

Bethlehem,' is forced, and leaves the transition from the sing. in *vv.* 3—5 to the plural unexplained. (2) It has been thought that *Ephrathah* may mean *Ephraim*, as *Ephrathite* means *Ephraimite* (1 Sam. i. 1), and that the reference is to the sojourn of the Ark at Shiloh. 'We heard that the Ark was in Shiloh in the days of old, but when we sought it, it was no longer there, but in an obscure refuge in the fields of the forest.' (3) Delitzsch ingeniously argues that *Ephrathah* was a name for the district in which Kiriath-jearim was situated. The first-born son of Caleb's wife Ephrath was Hur (1 Chron. ii. 19), who is called 'the father' of Bethlehem (1 Chron. iv. 4). Hur's son Shobal was 'the father' of Kiriath-jearim, and his son Salma the 'father' of Bethlehem (1 Chron. ii. 50, 51). May not the district of Kiriath-jearim have been called Ephrathah, as well as that of Bethlehem? This is perhaps the best explanation; for there can be little doubt that *the fields of the forest* (*jaar*) mean the neighbourhood of Kiriath-jearim, 'the city of forests,' where the Ark had rested for many years in the house of Abinadab (1 Sam. vii. 1, 2), and still was, when David resolved to remove it to Zion (1 Chron. xiii. 5, 6). It should be noticed that the narrative in 1 Sam. vii. 1 ff. implies that the Ark was not actually in the town, but in its neighbourhood.

The suggestion that *Ephrathah* means *the fertile plains*, and *the fields of the forest* the uncultivated jungle, and that the meaning is, 'the news of David's plan spread through field and forest,' i.e. all over the country, is far-fetched and improbable

7. Let us go into his dwelling place,
Let us worship at the footstool of his feet.

This is the mutual exhortation of the Israelites to come and worship in the 'dwelling place' (*v.* 5) which David had resolved to prepare, before the Ark. Jehovah's footstool may mean His sanctuary, as in xcix. 5; but here more probably, as in 1 Chron. xxviii. 2, the Ark is meant. As He is enthroned upon the Cherubim, the Ark beneath them is His footstool. This verse anticipates, for the next verse implies that the translation of the Ark has not yet been effected.

8. The people's prayer that Jehovah will occupy the **resting-place** (1 Chron. xxviii. 2) prepared for Him; that His Presence may accompany the symbol of it. The first line is an adaptation of the watchword used when the Ark started to find a resting-place for the Israelites in their wanderings. See Num. x. 33, 35. In 2 Chron. vi. 41, 42 the words of the Psalm are quoted at the close of Solomon's prayer at the Dedication of the Temple, and some commentators suppose that in *vv.* 8 ff. the Psalmist carries us on into the Solomonic period; but it is simpler and more natural to suppose that he is still describing David's translation of the Ark to Zion.

the ark of thy strength] See 1 Sam. v. 7; vi. 19 ff.; Ps. lxxviii. 61.

Let thy priests be clothed *with* righteousness; 9
And let thy saints shout for joy.
For thy servant David's sake 10
Turn not away the face of thine anointed.

The LORD hath sworn *in* truth unto David; 11
He will not turn from it;
Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.
If thy children will keep my covenant 12

9. *Let thy priests be clothed* with *righteousness*] May those who minister in the sanctuary be worthy servants of a righteous God, fit representatives of a righteous nation (Is. xxvi. 2)! The white priestly garments were intended to be symbolical of purity of character (Rev. xix. 8). For the metaphor cp. Job xxix. 14.

let thy saints &c.] May thy chosen people worship there with jubilant rejoicing! For the meaning of *thy saints*, i.e. **thy beloved**, or **thy godly ones**, see Appendix, Note I.

10. This verse is still part of the people's prayer, though its language is coloured by the feeling of the Psalmist's own age, and expresses the perplexity of a time in which Jehovah seemed to have disowned His anointed. The people pray for a blessing on each successive king for David's sake. *Thine anointed* is not David only, but David and his successors, Jehovah's anointed king for the time being. For him the people pray that Jehovah will not 'turn away his face,' i.e. repulse his requests or banish him from His favour and presence. For the phrase cp. 1 Kings ii. 16; 2 Kings xviii. 24; Ps. lxxxiv. 9. The thought corresponds to the promise so prominent in 2 Sam. vii, that David's house should be established 'before Jehovah' (*v.* 16, read 'before *me*,' *vv.* 26, 29). Cp. Ps. lxi. 7.

11—18. Jehovah's answer to the prayer with which the Psalm begins. He will remember David, for He has chosen Zion to be His abode, and He will bless her people and her priests, and restore the power and prosperity of David's house.

11. *The LORD hath sworn* &c.] The answer to the prayer of *v.* 1 is given by recalling the promise to David which Jehovah has solemnly pledged Himself to fulfil. The narrative of 2 Sam. vii does not speak of God's promise to David as confirmed by an oath; but, as in lxxxix. 3, 35, 49, it is the poet's mode of emphasising the solemnity and immutability of the Divine promise. Cp. cx. 4; Is. xlv. 23.

in *truth*] Or perhaps, *truth*, i.e. a promise which will surely be fulfilled, *from which he will not swerve*. Cp. 2 Sam. vii. 28, "Thy words are truth."

Of the fruit &c.] The contents of the oath. Cp. 2 Sam. vii. 12.

12. *If thy* sons *will keep*] The condition of the literal fulfilment of the promise is implied in 2 Sam. vii. 14, and explicitly stated in 1 Kings viii. 25. In Ps. lxxxix. 30 ff. the thought is developed, that man's faithlessness cannot finally defeat God's purpose.

And my testimony that I shall teach them,
Their children also shall sit upon thy throne for evermore.

13 For the LORD hath chosen Zion;
He hath desired *it* for his habitation.
14 This *is* my rest for ever:
Here will I dwell; for I have desired it.
15 I will abundantly bless her provision:
I will satisfy her poor *with* bread.
16 I will also clothe her priests with salvation:
And her saints shall shout aloud for joy.
17 There will I make the horn of David to bud:

my testimony] Or, as P.B.V., **my testimonies.** See p. 704.

their children &c.] **Their sons also for ever shall sit upon thy throne,** lit. *upon a throne for thee*, as thy representatives.

13. *For the LORD hath chosen Zion*] The permanence of the Davidic kingdom is based upon the Divine choice of Zion. Here, as in lxxviii. 67 ff., the choice of Zion is regarded as antecedent to the choice of David. To the community of the Restoration this thought must have been a comfort: they felt that Jehovah had returned to dwell in Zion, and this was a pledge to them that He would in some way fulfil His promises to the house of David. Cp. Zech. ii. 12.

14. Jehovah speaks. The expression of His Will in the facts of history is translated into the form of an utterance. Observe the stress laid on the Divine choice: in making Jerusalem the religious centre of the nation (and ultimately of the world) David was fulfilling Jehovah's purpose. This verse corresponds to the prayer of *v.* 8, as *v.* 16 to that of *v.* 9.

my rest] **My resting-place,** as in *v.* 8. Cp. 1 Chron. xxviii. 2; Is. xi. 10; lxvi. 1.

15. *I will abundantly bless* &c.] Or, **I will surely bless.** The Divine blessing will rest upon people, priests (16), and rulers (17 f.). Even the poor shall not want. Cp. Deut. xv. 4. Palestine was liable to famines, and in the early days of the Restoration the community had suffered severely from scarcity (Haggai i. 6 ff.), but this was not God's Will[1].

16. **Her priests also will I clothe** *with salvation*] The correlative of *righteousness* in *v.* 9. He will prosper those who minister faithfully. Cp. Is. lxi. 10. *Health* in P.B.V. is an archaism for healing, deliverance, salvation. Cp. lxvii. 2.

17. *There*] In Jerusalem.

will I make the horn of David to bud] More exactly, **will I make a**

[1] The word for *provision* (צֵידָהּ) means also *prey*, and was rendered literally by the LXX, *θήραν* (א*T); but in some MSS (e.g. אAR) this was changed to *χήραν widow(s)*, either through a scribe's mistake, or because *prey* seemed unintelligible and *widows* might naturally be classed with the *poor*. Cp. Deut. xiv. 29. Hence the Vulg. *viduam*, Douay, *her widow*.

I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.
His enemies will I clothe with shame:
But upon himself shall his crown flourish. 18

horn sprout forth for David. The figure may mean simply, that Jehovah will restore the prosperity and victorious might of the house of David (cp. lxxxix. 17, 24; Ezek. xxix. 21). The verb *sprout* however suggests a reference to the prophecies of Jer. xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 15; Zech. iii. 8; vi. 12, where *tsemach*, 'sprout,' is used as a title of the Messianic king, while in Dan. vii. 7, 8, 24; viii. 5, 'horn' is a symbol for 'king,' so that the words may be intended to have a personal reference and point to the Messianic king. Zacharias appears to have had this passage in mind, Luke i. 69; and the fifteenth of the "eighteen Benedictions" in the Jewish Liturgy incorporates it. "Cause the sprout of David thy servant to sprout forth speedily, and let his horn be exalted in Thy salvation."

17 *I have* **prepared** *a lamp for mine anointed*] The burning lamp is a natural metaphor for the preservation of the dynasty (xviii. 28; 1 Kings xi. 36; xv. 4; 2 Sam. xxi. 17). The use of the verb **prepared**, as in Ex. xxvii. 20, 21; Lev. xxiv. 2, 3, 4, suggests that there may be an allusion here to the lamp kept burning perpetually in the sanctuary. *Mine anointed* is here David himself (xviii. 50), rather than his successors.

18. *will I clothe with shame*] The opposite of *salvation*, *v.* 16. Cp. xxxv. 26; Job viii. 22.

upon himself] Upon David in the person of his representative, who is called David in Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24.

shall his crown flourish] The expression is a peculiar one. (1) The word for 'crown' (*nēzer*) used here as in lxxxix. 39, means (*a*) 'consecration,' (*b*) 'a crown' or 'diadem,' as the mark of consecration to an office. It is used not only of a king's crown, but of the high-priest's diadem (Ex. xxix. 6). (2) The verb *yātsīts*, 'flourish,' or rather 'sparkle,' 'glitter,' is cognate to the word *tsīts*, which denotes the glittering plate of gold bearing the inscription "Holiness to Jehovah" which the High-priest wore on his turban, and which is called in Ex. xxix. 30, "the plate of the holy diadem." This phraseology seems intended to suggest that David's representative will have high-priestly as well as royal dignity. Cp. Jer. xxx. 21; Zech. vi. 11—13.

PSALM CXXXIII.

This Psalm is commonly supposed to describe the blessings which flowed from the meeting of the Israelites at Jerusalem at the great religious festivals. Such meetings were a consecration of the whole nation; they diffused a spirit of brotherly harmony throughout it; they sustained and quickened the national life by bringing individuals into fellowship with Jehovah and with one another at the religious centre of His choice. Attractive as this view is, and natural as it may have been to apply the Psalm to these gatherings, it is questionable whether

it was the sight of them which inspired the poet. "Dwelling together" implies more than a temporary sojourn for a few days; and it seems preferable to connect the Psalm with Nehemiah's efforts to re-people Jerusalem (Neh. xi. 1 ff.). It presents an ideal to be aimed at. Old animosities are to be laid aside. Brethren are to dwell together as brethren should do. A strong and united metropolis, at once the religious and political centre of the country, will consecrate and invigorate the whole nation, and spread blessing through the body of which it is the head.

If the title *of David* could be regarded as authentic, the Psalm might refer to the reunion of the nation after the civil discords of the early years of his reign. It is however wanting in the Targum, and in some MSS of the LXX and of Jerome, and the language of the Psalm points to a post-exilic date for this as for the other Psalms of Ascent.

A Song of degrees of David.

133 Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is*
For brethren to dwell together in unity.
2 *It is* like the precious ointment upon the head,
That ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard:
That went down to the skirts of his garments;

1. *Behold* &c.] The Psalmist seems to have before his eyes some instance of the blessing and the beauty of brotherly concord which prompts his song. May it not have been the enthusiasm of those who volunteered to dwell in Jerusalem, when Nehemiah was restoring its civic and religious organisation (Neh. xi. 2)?

for brethren to dwell together in unity] Lit. *the dwelling of brethren also together*: i.e. that the tie of intimate relationship denoted by the name of *brethren* should find outward expression in the gathering of Israelites to make their home in the mother-city, or, if the reference of the Psalm is to the great Feasts, in the reunions of the members of the nation at these periodical gatherings. By *brethren* he does not mean the members of a single family, but the members of the larger family of Israel, the whole nation. *In unity* is doubtless a correct interpretation of the Psalmist's meaning, though it goes beyond the strict sense of the Heb. word, which only means *together*.

2. **It is like the goodly oil upon the head descending upon the beard, even Aaron's beard,**
Which descendeth upon the collar of his garments.

Oil was a symbol of joy and festivity (Ps. xlv. 7), but it is not common oil that is mentioned here. The brotherly concord of the dwellers in Jerusalem is compared to the sacred oil with which the High-priest was anointed (Ex. xxx. 23 ff.). This sacred oil was *poured* upon Aaron's head (Ex. xxix. 7; Lev. viii. 12; xxi. 10) when he was consecrated to the office of high-priest, whereas the ordinary priests were only sprinkled with it (Ex. xxix. 21). It would flow down upon his beard and on to his shoulders and his breast, upon which he bore the names

As the dew of Hermon, *and as the dew* that descended 3
upon the mountains of Zion:
For there the LORD commanded the blessing,

of the Twelve Tribes (Ex. xxviii. 9—12, 17—21), symbolising thereby the consecration of the whole nation of which he was the representative. The stream of perfumed oil, carefully compounded with aromatic spices, would diffuse its fragrance all around, symbolising the holy influence which should emanate from the chief religious representative of Israel, and from the nation which he represented. The point of the simile then seems to be, that as the sacred oil flowed down over Aaron's shoulders, so the harmonious unity of those who dwell in Jerusalem will influence the whole nation for good. The same spirit will be diffused throughout the whole community. Cp. Ps. cxxii.

Aaron might denote any high-priest; but the Psalmist by the use of the present participles seems rather to intend to recall the scene of the consecration of Aaron himself (Lev. viii). It might have been thought that he was alluding to some recent ceremony; but according to Jewish tradition, the sacred oil was wanting in the time of the Second Temple, and the high-priest was consecrated by investiture with the pontifical robes only.

It is a question whether the clause *which descendeth upon the collar of his garments* refers to the oil or to Aaron's beard. The Massoretic accentuation (unless it is to be regarded as rhythmical and not syntactical) makes it refer to Aaron's beard: the Ancient Versions take it to refer to the oil. In the former case the beard is thought of as connecting the head and the garments; but the latter interpretation is the more natural, and is supported by the fondness of the Psalms of Ascent for the repetition of words.

The collar not *the skirts* of the high-priest's garment is denoted by the Heb. word, which means literally 'mouth' or 'opening,' i.e. the hole through which the head passed, or its bordering. Cp. Ex. xxviii. 32; xxxix. 23; Job xxx. 18.

3. Like dew of Hermon, which descendeth *upon the mountains of Zion*] There is no justification for inserting the words *and as the dew*, as in A.V. "The dews of Syrian nights are excessive; on many mornings it looks as if there had been heavy rain" (G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geogr.* p. 65); and the dew that falls on the slopes of the snow-clad Hermon is particularly copious. Dew is a symbol for what is refreshing, quickening, invigorating; and the Psalmist compares the influence of brotherly unity upon the nation to the effect of the dew upon vegetation. From such dwelling together individuals draw fresh energy; the life of the community, social and religious, is revived and quickened. It need not be supposed that the poet imagined that the dew which fell upon the mountains of Zion was in any way physically due to the influence of Mount Hermon (though it is possible that it was popularly supposed that there was some connexion); all he means is that the life-giving effect of harmonious unity upon the nation is as though the most abundant dews fell upon the dry mountain of Zion.

for there &c.] In Jerusalem. Cp. cxxxii. 17. Jehovah has connected

Even life for evermore.

the blessing of a vigorous national life with the religious centre of His choice.

life for evermore] Cp. Ecclus. xxxvii. 25, "The days of Israel are innumerable." But perhaps *for evermore* should be connected with *commanded*. For *life* cp. xxxvi. 9.

PSALM CXXXIV.

This Psalm consists of a call (1, 2) and a response (3). The call appears to be addressed by the worshippers in the Temple to the priests and Levites whose duty it was to render the nightly service of praise to Jehovah, and their leader responds to it with a priestly blessing. The Psalm forms a fit conclusion to the collection of Pilgrim-Songs. It may have been composed after the restoration of the Temple-services by Nehemiah (Neh. xii. 44—47). "The people," we read there, "rejoiced over the priests and the Levites that waited," lit. *stood*, i.e. took their part in ministering, as in *v.* 1. But there is no definite indication of date or occasion.

A Song of degrees.

134 Behold, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD,
Which by night stand in the house of the LORD.
2 Lift up your hands *in* the sanctuary,
And bless the LORD.
3 The LORD that made heaven and earth
Bless thee out of Zion.

1. *all ye servants of the LORD*] Not Israelite worshippers in general, but, as the following clause shews, ministrants in the Temple.

which by night stand in the house of the LORD] 'To stand before Jehovah' was the regular term for priestly or Levitical ministration. Cp. Deut. x. 8 &c.; Heb. x. 11.

The words imply that services of praise and thanksgiving were held in the Temple at night; possibly a reference to such services is to be found in 1 Chron. ix. 33.

The addition *even in the courts of the house of our God* in the P.B.V. is derived through the Vulg. from the LXX, and comes from CXXXV. 2.

2. *Lift up your hands*] The gesture of prayer. Cp. xxviii. 2; 1 Tim. ii. 8.

in *the sanctuary*] Rather to *the sanctuary*, towards the most holy place, as the earthly dwelling-place of Jehovah. The rendering of R.V. marg., *in holiness*, is less probable.

3. The response of the priests,

Jehovah bless thee out of Zion,
Even the maker of heaven and earth.

The first line is taken from the priestly blessing in Num. vi. 24, with the addition of *out of Zion* (cxxviii. 5). The singular *thee* may denote the congregation as a whole or each individual in it. The attribute *Maker of heaven and earth* implies Jehovah's power to bless. Cp. cxv. 15, note.

PSALM CXXXV.

This Psalm was obviously intended for use in the worship of the Second Temple. It begins with a call to those who minister there to praise Jehovah, Who has chosen Israel to be His peculiar people (1—4). His omnipotence is manifested in Nature (5—7), and in History (8—12). He will not forsake His people, whereas the idols of the heathen are nought, and cannot save their worshippers (13—18). Let all Israel unite in praising this glorious God (19—21).

Though the Psalm is little more than a mosaic of fragments and reminiscences from Law, Prophets, and other Psalms, it possesses real vigour of rhythm and spirit. It is an expansion of Ps. cxxxiv, and it should be compared with the blessing of the Levites in Neh. ix. 4 ff., though there the whole course of Israel's history is reviewed at length.

Praise ye the LORD. 135
Praise ye the name of the LORD;
Praise *him*, O ye servants of the LORD.
Ye that stand in the house of the LORD, 2
In the courts of the house of our God,
Praise the LORD; for the LORD *is* good: 3
Sing *praises* unto his name; for *it is* pleasant.
For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, 4
And Israel for his peculiar treasure.
For I know that the LORD *is* great, 5

1—4. A call to Jehovah's servants to praise Him, since he has chosen Israel to be His own people.

1. *Praise ye the LORD*] Heb. Hallelujah. The verse is identical with cxiii. 1, except that the clauses are transposed.

2. *Ye that stand* &c.] As in cxxxiv. 1, those who minister in the Temple and its precincts are summoned to praise. It is less natural to suppose that the first line refers to the priests and Levites, and the second line (*ye that stand* being supplied) to the worshippers in the outer court.

3. *for* it is *pleasant*] Either 'His name is lovely,' or 'it is pleasant to sing praise.' Cp. cxlvii. 1.

4. *the LORD*] Heb. Jah. The verse is based upon Deut. vii. 6; cp. Ex. xix. 5.

5—7. Jehovah's greatness and sovereignty exhibited in Nature.

5. *For I know*] A further reason for praising Jehovah. *I* is

And *that* our Lord *is* above all gods.
6 Whatsoever the LORD pleased,
That did he in heaven, and in earth,
In the seas, and all deep places.
7 He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth,
He maketh lightnings for the rain;
He bringeth the wind out of his treasuries.
8 Who smote the firstborn of Egypt,
Both of man and beast.
9 *Who* sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt,
Upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.
10 Who smote great nations,
And slew mighty kings;
11 Sihon king of the Amorites,
And Og king of Bashan,
And all the kingdoms of Canaan:

emphatic. Though the nations are ignorant of it, Israel in whose name the Psalmist speaks, knows the supreme greatness of Jehovah.

above all gods] It is clear from *vv.* 15 ff. that the Psalmist does not intend by this comparison to imply that the gods of the heathen have any real existence.

6. Whatsoever Jehovah pleased hath he done,
In heaven, and in earth, in the seas and all deeps.

The first line is identical with CXV. 3*b*: the second is based on Ex. xx. 4. The *deeps* are "the waters under the earth," the subterranean abyss of waters on which the earth was thought to rest. Cp. xxiv. 2; cxxxvi. 6.

7. Taken almost verbatim from Jer. x. 13 (=li. 16), where the words occur in a similar context, contrasting Jehovah with idols.

from the ends of the earth] From the most remote quarters; so that "thou knowest not whence they arise" (S. Aug.); or from the horizon, where they seem to rise as they come into view. Cp. 1 Kings xviii. 44.

for the rain] Along with the rain.

his treasuries] Cp. xxxiii. 7; Job xxxviii. 22.

8—12. Jehovah's sovereignty exhibited in the deliverance of His people from Egypt and their establishment in the land of Canaan.

9. Who *sent tokens*] **He sent signs.**

10. *great nations*] Or, **many nations.** Cp. Deut. vii. 1.

11. Sihon and Og, "the two kings of the Amorites," are mentioned as the first and some of the most formidable enemies whom the Israelites met. See Num. xxi. 21 ff., 33 ff.; Deut. ii. 30 ff., iii. 1 ff.; and cp. Am. ii. 9.

kingdoms] Cp. Deut. iii. 21; Josh. xii. 7—24.

And gave their land *for* an heritage, 12
An heritage unto Israel his people.
Thy name, O LORD, *endureth* for ever; 13
And thy memorial, O LORD, throughout all generations.
For the LORD will judge his people, 14
And he will repent himself concerning his servants.

The idols of the heathen *are* silver and gold, 15
The work of men's hands.
They have mouths, but they speak not; 16
Eyes have they, but they see not;
They have ears, but they hear not; 17
Neither is there *any* breath in their mouths.
They that make them are like unto them: 18
So is every one that trusteth in them.

Bless the LORD, O house of Israel: 19
Bless the LORD, O house of Aaron:
Bless the LORD, O house of Levi: 20
Ye that fear the LORD, bless the LORD.
Blessed *be* the LORD out of Zion, which dwelleth *at* 21
Jerusalem.

12. *an heritage*] Cp. Deut. iv. 38.

13—18. Jehovah is eternally the same, and will not forget His people; whereas the impotent gods of the heathen cannot protect their worshippers.

13. Cp. Ex. iii. 15; Ps. xxx. 4; cii. 12. Jehovah's Name is called His *memorial*, as bringing to mind all that He is and does. Such as He has once revealed Himself to be He will continue for ever. Cp. Heb. xiii. 8.

14. Taken verbatim from Deut. xxxii. 36; cp. Ps. xc. 13. In virtue of His relation to Israel He will do them justice, and not finally abandon them.

15—18. Taken with some alterations from cxv. 4—8. The nonentity of the heathen gods is contrasted with the sovereignty of Jehovah.

18. **Like unto them shall their makers become,**
Even everyone that trusteth in them.

19—21. All Israel is summoned to praise Jehovah.

19, 20. The three-fold call of cxv. 9—11; cxviii. 2—4 is here expanded by the addition of the house of Levi.

21. *Blessed* be **Jehovah** *out of Zion*] This final adoration corresponds to the prayer with which Ps. cxxxiv concludes. From Zion, which is

Praise ye the LORD.

His earthly dwelling-place, Jehovah's blessing goes forth upon His people: from Zion where they meet to worship, must ring out His people's answer of adoring praise.

Praise ye the LORD] **Hallelujah**; omitted by the LXX.

PSALM CXXXVI.

Another liturgical Psalm, closely resembling Ps. cxxxv, but distinguished by the refrain which forms the second half of each verse. This refrain was evidently sung as a response, either by a choir of priests and Levites answering the choir or the singer who chanted the first line; or by the whole congregation. We read that at the laying of the foundation stone of the Second Temple the priests and Levites "answered one another in praising and giving thanks to Jehovah, saying, For he is good, for his lovingkindness endureth for ever toward Israel" (Ezra iii. 11; cp. 2 Chron. vii. 3, 6); and an analogy for the congregational response may be found in the statement that on certain occasions the people answered with *Amen*, or *Amen, Hallelujah* (cvi. 48, note; Deut. xxvii. 15; Neh. v. 13; viii. 6).

This Psalm was known in the liturgical language of the Jews as "the Great Hallel" ("the Hallel" being Pss. cxiii—cxviii); but the term was also applied to Ps. cxxxv. 4—cxxxvi, and to the whole group cxx—cxxxvi (Delitzsch).

The Psalm is arranged in well marked groups of three verses to the end of *v.* 18, after which follow two groups of four verses: but as *vv.* 17—22 are taken from Ps. cxxxv, and *v.* 25 is in no obvious connexion with the context, it may be questioned whether the text is in order. Some forms of the LXX, as represented by the Old Latin in the Gallican Psalter, repeated *v.* 3 at the end, and the P.B.V. retains the addition.

The Hebrew text of the Book of Ecclesiasticus contains a hymn of thanksgiving which is an obvious imitation of this Psalm, and is largely composed of phrases taken from Psalms in Book v, particularly cxxi, cxxxii, cxlvii, cxlviii.

It follows ch. li. 12, "Therefore I give thanks and will praise, and will bless the name of Jehovah," and runs thus (the refrain being omitted for brevity):

1. O give thanks unto Jehovah for he is good: for his lovingkindness (endureth) for ever (cxxxvi. 1).
2. O give thanks unto the God of praises (xxii. 3), for &c.
3. O give thanks unto the keeper of Israel (cxxi. 4), for &c.
4. O give thanks unto the former of all things (Jer. x. 16), for &c.
5. O give thanks unto the redeemer of Israel (Is. xlix. 7), for &c.
6. O give thanks unto him that gathereth the outcasts of Israel (Ps. cxlvii. 2*b*; cp. Is. xi. 12, lvi. 8), for &c.

7. O give thanks unto him that buildeth his city and his sanctuary (Ps. cxlvii. 2 *a*), for &c.

8. O give thanks unto him that maketh a horn to sprout for the house of David (Ps. cxxxii. 17), for &c.

9. O give thanks unto him that chooseth the sons of Zadok to be priests (cp. Ezek. xl. 46), for &c.

10. O give thanks unto the Shield of Abraham (Gen. xv. 1), for &c.

11. O give thanks unto the Rock of Isaac, for &c.

12. O give thanks unto the Mighty One of Jacob (Ps. cxxxii. 2, 5), for &c.

13. O give thanks unto him that hath chosen Zion (Ps. cxxxii. 13), for &c.

14. O give thanks unto the King of the kings of kings, for &c.

15. And he hath lifted up a horn for his people, a praise for all his beloved, even the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Hallelujah. (cxlviii. 14).

If this hymn was composed by Ben Sira, it proves that he was familiar with Psalms, some of which have been regarded as among the latest in the Psalter, and it affords a strong presumption that the Psalter was complete before B.C. 180. The hymn, it is true, is not found in the Versions, but Dr Schechter thinks that its authenticity is established, and that its omission is accounted for, by the prominence which it gives to the house of Zadok. It was natural for Ben Sira, who knew that family in its best representative, Simon the Just, to give thanks for its election to the priesthood: it was equally natural for his grandson the translator to omit such a thanksgiving, when the high-priests of the house of Zadok had disgraced their calling, and the house of Zadok had been superseded by the Maccabaean line. See Schechter and Taylor's *Wisdom of Ben Sira* (1899), p. 35.

O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good: 136
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
O give thanks unto the God of gods: 2
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
O give thanks to the Lord of lords: 3
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
To him who alone doeth great wonders: 4
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.

1—3. A call to thanksgiving.

1. Cp. cvi. 1, note; cvii. 1; cxviii. 1.
his mercy] His loving-kindness, and so throughout the Ps.
2, 3. *the God of gods...the Lord of lords*] From Deut. x. 17.

4—9. Jehovah the Creator.

4. Cp. lxxii. 18; lxxxvi. 10.

5 To him that by wisdom made the heavens:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
6 To him that stretched out the earth above the waters:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
7 To him that made great lights:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
8 The sun to rule by day:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
9 The moon and stars to rule by night:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
10 To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
11 And brought out Israel from among them:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
12 With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
13 To him which divided the Red sea into parts:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
14 And made Israel to pass through the midst of it:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
15 But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
16 To him which led his people through the wilderness:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
17 To him which smote great kings:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
18 And slew famous kings:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
19 Sihon king of the Amorites:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:

5. *by wisdom*] By understanding, as Prov. iii. 19; Jer. x. 12.

6. *that* spread forth *the earth* upon *the waters*] Cp. cxxxv. 6, note; Is. xlii. 5; xliv. 24; Ps. xxiv. 2.

7—9. Cp. Gen. i. 14—16.

10—15. Jehovah the Deliverer of Israel. Cp. cxxxv. 8 ff.

12. From Deut. iv. 34, &c.; cp. Ex. vi. 1, 6.

13. *into parts*] R.V. in sunder. *In two parts* of P.B.V. is a printer's error. The Great Bible of 1539 has *into partes*.

15. *overthrew*] Lit. *shook off*, as Ex. xiv. 27.

16—22. Jehovah the Giver of the promised land. Cp. cxxxv. 10 ff.

16. Cp. Deut. viii. 15.

And Og the king of Bashan: 20
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
And gave their land for an heritage: 21
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
Even an heritage unto Israel his servant: 22
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
Who remembered us in our low estate: 23
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
And hath redeemed us from our enemies: 24
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
Who giveth food to all flesh: 25
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
O give thanks unto the God of heaven: 26
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.

22. *Israel his servant*] Cp. Is. xli. 8; &c.

23—26. Jehovah the Deliverer of Israel and the Supporter of all things living.

23. *in our low estate*] The humiliation of the Exile.

24. *And hath redeemed* &c.] R.V. **and hath delivered us from our adversaries.**

25. Cp. civ. 27 f.; cxlv. 15; cxlvii. 9. *All flesh* includes all living things. Cp. Gen. vi. 13. The mention of the universal Providence of God follows somewhat abruptly on the celebration of His care for Israel, and it is possible that there has been some corruption or dislocation of the text.

26. *the God of heaven*] A late title, occurring here only in the Psalter. It is found in Ezra i. 2, &c.; Neh. i. 4; ii. 4; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 23; Jonah i. 9; Daniel ii. 18, &c. Cp. Apoc. xi. 13; xvi. 11.

The P.B.V. adds "O give thanks unto the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever." This repetition of *v.* 3 is taken from the Gallican Psalter, but is not found in any extant MS of the LXX.

PSALM CXXXVII.

Israel's minstrels were silent in the land of exile, when they were tauntingly bidden to display their skill for the amusement of their captors (1—3). How could they sing Jehovah's songs in a heathen land? how forget Jerusalem (4—6)? Perish the enemies that had wrought her ruin and rejoiced at her fall (7—9)!

The tender pathos of the opening verses enlists our sympathy; the crash of bitter denunciation in the closing stanza shocks and repels. But implacable hatred of Zion's foes was in those days the inevitable correlative to intense love for her. The new law, "Thou shalt love thine enemy," had not yet taken the place of the old maxim, "Thou

shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy." The law of stern retribution for cruel wrong seems to the Psalmist only just, and the peculiarly barbarous form in which he expresses his desire for the extermination of the destroyer of his country is only such as was familiar to his age.

The Psalm is generally thought to have been written soon after the Return from Babylon in B.C. 537, while Babylon, though it had lost its independence, still enjoyed a large measure of prosperity under the mild rule of Cyrus. The past tenses of *vv.* 1—3 seem to imply that the writer and his companions are no longer in exile, while from *vv.* 7—9 it appears that the wrongs of Israel have not yet been fully avenged on Babylon.

A date before the close of the Exile is not indeed impossible. At first sight *vv.* 4—6 read like the words of those who are still in exile; *vv.* 7—9 seem to anticipate a judgement still wholly future; the tenses in *vv.* 1—3 might be taken as perfects ('have we sat down' &c.), describing a state of things still existing; and the denunciation of Babylon in Jer. li, which probably belongs to the closing years of the Exile (Driver, *Lit. of O. T.*[6], p. 268), breathes a very similar spirit to that of the Psalm.

These reasons, however, are not conclusive. *Vv.* 4—6 can be understood as dramatically expressing the feelings of the exiles in the actual words which they might have used at the time; Babylon was not destroyed by Cyrus, and its capture must have seemed a very imperfect measure of retribution; *there* in *vv.* 1, 3 points decidedly to Babylon from a distance; and a date immediately after the return from Babylon is the most probable. The first sight of the ruins of the city and Temple might well have moved the Psalmist to recall his faithfulness to Zion in the distant land of exile, and to give utterance to his longing for vengeance upon those who had wrought this havoc and rejoiced at the sight of it. The author may have been a Levite, who had taken part or looked forward to taking part in the Temple music, and returned in extreme old age to Jerusalem; one possibly of those whose regrets for past glories overwhelmed them at the laying of the foundation of the Temple (Ezra iii. 12).

That the Psalm is, as Professor Cheyne thinks (*Origin of the Psalter*, p. 69 f.), "a dramatic lyric," written in the time of Simon the Maccabee, four hundred years after the Return, is in the highest degree unlikely.

The title in the LXX, τῷ Δαυὶδ Ἰερεμίου or διὰ Ἰ. ('*Of David; Jeremiah's*, or '*by Jeremiah*'), appears to represent two views as to its origin. In style it may have been thought to resemble Davidic Psalms, and in tone the writings of Jeremiah; but as Jeremiah never was in Babylon the ascription of the Psalm to him is out of the question.

137 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept,

1—3. The silence of sacred song in the sorrow of exile.

1. *the rivers of Babylon*] Not only the Euphrates and its tributaries,

When we remembered Zion.
We hanged our harps
Upon the willows in the midst thereof.
For there they that carried us away captive required of 3
us a song;
And they that wasted us *required of us* mirth,
Saying, Sing us *one* of the songs of Zion.
How shall we sing the LORD'S song
In a strange land?

such as the Chebar (Ezek. i. 1; iii. 15), but the numerous canals with which the country was intersected. Babylonia was characteristically a land of streams, as Palestine was a land of hills; it was the feature of the country which would impress itself upon the mind of the exiles. Cp. Jer. li. 13. They may have resorted to the banks of the rivers and canals to mourn; partly for the sake of the shade of the trees which grew there, partly because such places were suitable to melancholy meditation.

It is hardly likely that there is any reference to places of prayer chosen near water for the sake of ceremonial lustrations (Acts xvi. 13).

sat down] As mourners. Cp. Is. xlvii. 1, 5.

Zion] The name is chosen specially to suggest the sacred memories of the city.

2. Upon the willows in the midst thereof,
We hung our harps.

the willows] Cp. Is. xliv. 4. The tree meant, however, was probably not the weeping willow, but the *populus Euphratica*.

3. *For there* &c.] The reason why their harps were silent. It might have been expected that they would soothe their sorrow with plaintive music; but the heartless demand of their captors made it impossible.

asked *of us* **songs**] Lit. *words of song*.

they that wasted us] The exact meaning is doubtful. The A.V. marg. 'Heb. *laid us on heaps*' rests on an impossible derivation, and the R.V. marg. *our tormentors* on an improbable one. Perhaps with the change of a single letter *shōlelēnu*, 'our spoilers,' should be read instead of the obscure *tōlālēnu*.

Coverdale's rendering in the P.B.V., *and melody in our heaviness*, comes from Luther, 'und in unserm Heulen ein fröhlich Gesang.'

one *of the songs of Zion*] Or, some *of the songs*. As these songs are called in the next verse *Jehovah's songs*, it is clear that it is not secular songs that are meant, but the sacred hymns of the Temple worship (2 Chron. xxix. 27). To sing these for the amusement of their conquerors would have been the grossest profanation of all that they held most dear; an act comparable to Belshazzar's use of the consecrated vessels at his feast (Dan. v. 2). Cp. Matt. vii. 6.

4—6. The exiles indignantly repudiate the idea of doing what would

5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget *her cunning.*
6 If I do not remember thee,
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth;
If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.
7 Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom *in* the day of Jerusalem;
Who said, Rase *it*, rase *it*, *even* to the foundation thereof.
8 O daughter of Babylon, who art *to be* destroyed;

be treason to the memories of Zion. The protest is dramatically expressed in the words which they would have used at the time.

5. *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem*] To have consented would have seemed an act of unfaithfulness to Zion. Some of the exiles did forget the "holy mountain" (Is. lxv. 11). For the imprecation as a solemn asseveration cp. Job xxxi. 21, 22.

forget her cunning] So the aposiopesis is admirably completed in the Great Bible of 1540. Less forcibly the LXX and Jer. read the verb as a passive, 'Let my right hand be forgotten,' which is the rendering of Coverdale (1535), retained in the first edition of the Great Bible.

6. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
If I remember thee not (R.V.).

Let all power of speech and song desert me. Cp. Job xxix. 10.

if I prefer not &c.] Lit. *if I exalt not Jerusalem above my chiefest joy*: i.e. if I do not regard J. as dearer to me than aught else.

7—9. The Psalmist's love for Jerusalem leads him to invoke vengeance on her enemies: upon Edom for the unbrotherly spite which rejoiced at her destruction; upon Babylon, for having accomplished that destruction

7. Remember, Jehovah, against the children of Edom the day of Jerusalem] Remember and punish the conduct of the Edomites in the fatal day of Jerusalem's fall. For this sense of 'remember' cp. Neh. vi. 14; xiii. 29; and for 'day' cp. Ob. 12; Ps. xxxvii. 13. The hostility of the Edomites to Israel was of long standing, and it was aggravated by the fact of their relationship through their descent from Esau and Jacob They are repeatedly denounced for it by the prophets, and threatened with vengeance. See Amos i. 11; Obad. 10 ff.; Joel iii. 19; Jer. xlix. 7 ff.; Lam. iv. 21 f.; Ezek. xxv. 12 ff.; xxxv. 2 ff.; Is. xxxiv; lxiii. 1 ff. *Rase* it] Lit. *lay (it) bare.*

8. *O daughter of Babylon*] The city of Babylon personified.

who art to be *destroyed*] The most obvious translation is that of R.V. marg., **that art laid waste.** So Aq. and Jerome, *vastata.* But the following clauses apparently imply that Babylon has not been destroyed, and the participle may be 'prophetic,' *that art doomed to be laid waste*[1].

[1] Coverdale and the Great Bible of 1539 have, *thou shalt come to misery thy self,*

Happy *shall he be*, that rewardeth thee
As thou hast served us.
Happy *shall he be* that taketh
And dasheth thy little ones against the stones. 9

Delitzsch quotes examples of a similar idiom in Arabic. 'The stricken one,'='one who is doomed to be stricken.' So Theodotion, ἡ διαρπασθησομένη. Some of the Ancient Versions, however (Symm., Syr., Targ.), render *thou waster*, a rendering which only requires a slight change of the text, and is adopted by many critics.

9. The barbarous customs of Oriental warfare spared neither women nor children in a war of extermination. Cp. Is. xiii. 16; Hos. x. 14; xiii. 16; Nah. iii. 10; 2 Kings viii. 12; Hom. *Il.* XXII. 63. The stern law of retaliation demanded that Babylon should be treated as she had treated Jerusalem. Cp. Is. xlvii. 1—9; Jer. li. 24, 56.

the stones] The rock or crag.

PSALM CXXXVIII.

This Psalm may best be understood as an expression of the gratitude and confidence of Israel after the Return from the Captivity. Speaking in the name of the people the Psalmist praises Jehovah before all the world for the fulfilment of His promises (1—3); anticipates the impression which the manifestation of His glory will make upon heathen nations (4—6); and looks forward to the completion of His purposes for His people, in spite of further troubles that may await them (7, 8).

To the Hebrew title 'A Psalm *of David*' some MSS of the Septuagint add *of Haggai and Zechariah*, or *of Zachariah*, possibly preserving a tradition that the Psalm belonged to the period of the Restoration, or suggesting that it fitly expressed the feelings of that period.

The tone and language of *vv.* 4—7 resemble cii. 15 ff., and many passages in Is. xl—lxvi where the hope of the conversion of the nations is connected with the Restoration of Israel from exile.

A Psalm of David.

I will praise thee with my whole heart: 138

1—3. Thanksgiving for Jehovah's manifestation of His lovingkindness and truth in the fulfilment of His promises.

1. **I will give thanks unto thee** *with my whole heart*] Cp. ix. 1. There is no need for the Psalmist to mention the name of Him Whom he addresses. The Ancient Versions, however, insert *O Lord*, after *thee*, and the P.B.V. follows them.

from Zürich Bible, *und du Babel, wirst auch ellend werden.* The P.B.V. *wasted with misery*, from the Great Bible of 1540, may have been suggested by Münster's *devastata* and the Vulg. *misera.*

Before the gods will I sing *praise* unto thee.
2 I will worship towards thy holy temple,
And praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth:
For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.
3 In the day when I cried thou answeredst me,
And strengthenedst me *with* strength in my soul.
4 All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD,
When they hear the words of thy mouth.

before the gods] The Psalmist stands face to face with the might of the heathen world, apparently under the patronage and protection of powerful gods, but the sight does not shake his fidelity to Jehovah. It is not to be supposed that he would have admitted that these gods had a real existence; he speaks of them only as they existed in the minds of their worshippers; practically it is before those worshippers that he proclaims his faith. Cp. xcv. 3; xcvi. 4, 5. The LXX, probably fearing to seem to attribute a real existence to heathen gods, renders *Elōhīm* by *angels* (cp. xcvii. 7); but beautiful and solemn as is the thought that the angels are spectators of man's worship, *Elōhīm* can hardly bear that meaning here. The Targ. renders it *judges*, the Syr. *kings*, giving a good sense (cp. cxix. 46); but though the title *Elōhīm* is applied to judges in lxxxii. 1, 6, where they are spoken of as representatives of God, there would be no special fitness in the use of the word here.

will I sing praise] **will I make melody**: sing psalms of praise, as in ci. 1, and elsewhere. Some texts of the LXX, and the Vulg., add *because thou hast heard the words of my mouth* after the first line, others at the end of the verse. It is a gloss suggested by *v.* 4.

2 *a*. A reminiscence of v. 7.

and **give thanks unto** *thy name...for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name*] By the accomplishment of His promises Jehovah has surpassed all previous revelations of Himself. The expression, however, is a strange one; possibly *thy word* is a gloss, and we should read *thou hast magnified thy name above all things*[1]. The P.B.V., *thou hast magnified thy name and thy word above all things* (derived from Münster, 'Magnificasti supra omnia nomen tuum et eloquium tuum') involves a harsh asyndeton.

3. and *strengthenedst me*] R.V. **thou didst encourage me**, giving me a proud consciousness of strength; a bold use of the word which elsewhere denotes pride in a bad sense.

4—6. Jehovah's faithfulness to His promises will evoke the homage of the world.

4. *All the kings of the earth* **shall give thanks unto thee, Jehovah**]

[1] The reading of the Massora, כִּי־כָל not כָּל־, is a reminiscence of this construction of the sentence. The Maqqēph should be omitted.

Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD:
For great *is* the glory of the LORD.
Though the LORD *be* high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly:
But the proud he knoweth afar off.
Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me:
Thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies,
And thy right hand shall save me.
The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me:
Thy mercy, O LORD, *endureth* for ever:
Forsake not the works of thine own hands.

When the kings of the nations hear of Jehovah's promises to Israel and His fulfilment of them, they will join in the Psalmist's thanksgiving. Cp. lxviii. 29 ff.; cii. 15, 16.

5. *they shall sing* **of** *the ways of* **Jehovah**] They will celebrate His providential methods of dealing with His people. For *ways* cp. ciii. 7.

the glory of **Jehovah**] The revelation of His power and majesty in the deliverance of Israel. Cp. Is. xl. 5; lx. 1.

6. For though Jehovah is *high, yet* **he seeth** *the lowly*] Exalted as He is, Jehovah never loses sight of the lowly, and in due time raises them up (Ex. iii. 7; Is. lvii. 15; lxvi. 2; Ps. cxiii. 5 ff.): **and the haughty** *he knoweth* **from** afar; no distance hides them from His eye, and they cannot escape the punishment they deserve. Cp. xciv. 7 ff.; Job xxii. 12 ff.; and for *know* see note on i. 6.

7, 8. Though fresh troubles may still await Israel, Jehovah will not fail to carry out His purposes for them.

7. *wilt revive me*] Or, *preserve me alive*. Cp. lxxi. 20; cxix. 25 &c.; cxliii. 11.

thou shalt stretch forth thine hand] A common figure for the exertion of Divine power to help or punish. Cp. cxliv. 7; Ex. iii. 20; ix. 15.

thy right hand &c.] Cp. xvii. 7; cxxxix. 10.

8. *will perfect that which concerneth me*] Will accomplish His promises and purposes for me. Cp. lvii. 2; Phil. i. 6 (ἐπιτελεῖν is the word used in Aquila's version here).

forsake not the works of thine own hands] The plural *works* and the parallelism of the first line shew that the meaning is not 'Do not abandon Israel whom Thou hast made'; but 'Do not fail to carry forward to completion the mighty works which Thou hast undertaken to do for Israel.' Cp. xc. 16; xcii. 5; cxliii. 5.

PSALM CXXXIX.

The consciousness of the intimate personal relation between God and man which is characteristic of the whole Psalter reaches its climax here.

The omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence of Jehovah are no cold philosophical abstractions for the Psalmist. He realises most vividly that Jehovah is One Who knows all his thoughts and actions, One from Whose universal Presence he cannot escape, One Who has fashioned his frame and ordered his life. With profound reverence he meditates on these truths in an address to God, recognising their mystery and awfulness, and seeking not to escape from God but to yield himself more fully to His control and guidance.

The Psalm falls into four divisions.

i. Jehovah knows every thought and action (1—6).

ii. To escape from His Presence is impossible (7—12).

iii. Nor is this surprising, for it is He Who has moulded the Psalmist's frame and ordered his life, with unsearchable depth of wisdom (13—18).

iv. How can this All-seeing, Almighty God tolerate evil men? With such the Psalmist will have no fellowship. May God search his heart, and purge it from every evil way (19—24)!

The title *A Psalm of David* cannot indicate its authorship. The language of the Psalm is not pure Hebrew, but is marked by a strong Aramaic colouring. It resembles the language of the Book of Job, and in several respects the thought of the Psalm is also akin to that book. The problem of God's tolerance of the wicked perplexed the Psalmist (*vv.* 19 ff.), as it perplexed Job. *Vv.* 13—16 resemble Job x. 9 ff. *Elōah*, the common word for God in Job, but found only four times in the Psalter, occurs in *v.* 19; and the word for 'slay' in the same verse is used in Heb. elsewhere only in Job, though it is common in Aramaic.

The addition *of Zachariah*, in Cod. A of the LXX, with the further gloss in the margin, *in the dispersion* (both readings are found in the Zürich Psalter, T) may preserve a tradition of the exilic or post-exilic origin of the Psalm. But when or where it was written must remain unknown. If the *provenance* of the Book of Job could be determined, we might be on the track of the origin of this Psalm.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

139 O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known *me.*
2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising,
Thou understandest my thought afar off.

1—6. God's perfect knowledge of all the Psalmist's life and thoughts.

1. *searched me*] Cp. *v.* 23; Jer. xvii. 10.

and known me] Or, and knowest me, for nothing can be hid from that omniscient scrutiny.

2. *Thou knowest*] *Thou* is emphatic. It is God alone Who possesses this absolute knowledge of His creatures.

my downsitting and mine uprising] My whole life, at rest or in activity. Cp. cxxvii. 2; Deut. vi. 7.

thought] The word used here and in *v.* 17 is an Aramaism, found here only in the O.T.

Thou compassest my path and my lying down, 3
And art acquainted *with* all my ways.
For *there is* not a word in my tongue, 4
But lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.
Thou hast beset me behind and before, 5
And laid thine hand upon me.
Such knowledge *is* too wonderful for me; 6
It is high, I cannot attain unto it.

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? 7
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

afar off] Cp. cxxxviii. 6; Jer. xxiii. 23. The P.B.V. *long before* is also a possible rendering. Neither space nor time exist for God.

3. *Thou compassest*] Rather, **Thou hast examined**, lit. *thou hast winnowed*, or *sifted*, subjecting my life to the closest and most discriminating investigation.

my path] Rather, *my walking*, contrasted with *my lying down*. Cp. Prov. vi. 22.

4. God knows not merely the spoken word which men can hear, but its true meaning, and the secret thoughts which prompt its utterance. But the verse may also be rendered, *For (when) a word is not yet on my tongue, Lo, thou* &c. Before thought has formed itself into words and found expression, the Searcher of hearts knows it.

5. *beset me*] The word is used of besieging a town. God hems him in on all sides so that he cannot escape. The P.B.V. *thou hast fashioned me* follows the LXX and other Ancient Versions in a less probable rendering.

laid thine hand upon me] God holds him fast in His grasp, exercises His authority over him. Cp. Job ix. 33.

6. A concluding exclamation of reverent awe. Such infinite knowledge baffles human thought to comprehend it. Cp. Rom. xi. 33.

(so) exalted (that) *I cannot attain unto it*] "The word used implies 'high so as to be inaccessible'; it is used, for instance, of an impregnable city, Deut. ii. 36" (Driver). It is also used of God, Is. ii. 11, 17; xii. 4.

7—12. God is everywhere present: man cannot escape or hide himself.

7. The power and presence of God are universal. The Psalmist's question does not imply that he wishes to escape from God, but that escape would be impossible if he wished it. The 'spirit of Jehovah' in the O.T. is "the living energy of a personal God" (see Swete in Hastings' *Bible Dict.* II. p. 404): His 'presence' (lit. *countenance*) is His personal manifestation of Himself in relation to men. See Oehler, *Theology of O.T.* I. § 57. Cp. Ex. xxxiii. 14, 15; Jon. i. 3, 10; Is. lxiii. 9, 10; Wisdom i. 7 ff.

8 If I ascend up *into* heaven, thou *art* there:
If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art there.*
9 *If* I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
10 Even there shall thy hand lead me,
And thy right hand shall hold me.
11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me;
Even the night *shall be* light about me.
12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee;
But the night shineth as the day:
The darkness and the light *are* both alike *to thee.*

13 For thou hast possessed my reins:

8. Cp. Amos ix. 2 ff.; Jer. xxiii. 24.

If I **should** *ascend up*] Another Aramaic word.

if I make my bed in hell] Render, **and if I should make Sheol my couch.**

9. **If I should lift up the wings of the dawn** &c.] If I were to fly with the swiftness of light from the east to the furthest west. The dawn swiftly spreading over the sky, is naturally represented as winged. Cp. 'wings of the wind,' Ps. xviii. 10, 'wings of the sun,' Mal. iv. 2.

The sea, from the position of the Mediterranean to the west of Palestine, denotes the West.

10. The thought in this context is not primarily that wherever he goes God's providential care accompanies him, but that there is no place in the universe where he can escape from the control and authority of God. "Dextra Dei ubique."

11, 12. And if I say, Nay, but darkness might shroud me,
And the light about me become night;
Even darkness hideth not from thee, &c.

It is as impossible to hide from God under cover of darkness as it is to escape from Him by change of place (*vv.* 8, 9). The A.V. *even the night shall be light about me* seems to mean that the light of God's presence will banish the terrors of darkness; but this sense does not fit the context. The Psalmist is not expressing his confidence in God's protection, but his conviction of His omniscience. Those who think to escape God's notice in the night as they avoid the eye of men (Job xxiv. 13—17) do but delude themselves. The word rendered *cover* or *shroud* is a rare one, and is elsewhere taken to mean *overwhelm* (R.V.) but this sense does not suit the context and we must either assume that it has an unusual meaning, or emend the text. Symm. and Jer. render *cover*.

13—18. God must know the Psalmist perfectly, for He ordered the first beginnings of his life, and foresaw all his destiny.

13. For it was thou that didst form my reins] **Thou** is emphatic. The connexion of thought expressed by *for* is not obvious; but it

Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.
I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully 14
made:
Marvellous *are* thy works;
And *that* my soul knoweth right well.
My substance was not hid from thee, 15
When I was made in secret,
And curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; 16
And in thy book all *my members* were written,

appears to give a reason for the intimate knowledge of which the preceding verses have spoken. 'Thou knowest me, for Thou didst create me.' *V.* 14 will then be a parenthetical exclamation of adoring wonder. The transposition of *vv.* 13, 14, proposed by some critics, removes the difficulty and gives a clearer connexion of thought, but poetry does not bind itself by forms of logic.

my reins] The inmost seat of the emotions, which God 'tries' (vii. 9).

thou hast covered me] Better, **thou didst knit me together**, with bones and sinews. Cp. Job x. 8—11.

14. *I will praise thee*] **I will give thanks unto thee.**

I am fearfully and wonderfully made] The Ancient Versions represent the second person, *thou art fearfully wondrous.*

marvellous] **Wonderful**, the same word as in the preceding clause.

15. *my substance*] R.V. **my frame**, lit. *my bones* or *skeleton.*

in secret] i.e in the womb (*v.* 13).

curiously wrought] i.e. fashioned with skill and care. (*Curious* = Lat. *curiosus*, 'wrought with care.' Cp. Ex. xxviii. 8, "the curious girdle of the ephod," R.V. "the cunningly woven band.") The word which means literally *woven* or *embroidered* with threads of different colours, is applied by a natural metaphor to the complex and intricate formation of the body.

in the lowest parts of the earth] In the womb, as dark and mysterious as the nether world. The formation of the body is meant, and there is no reference to the doctrine of the pre-existence of souls, which is found in Wisd. viii. 20; cp. Verg. *Aen.* VI. 713 ff., 884. See Schultz, *O. T. Theology*, Vol. II. p. 251, E.T.

16. *my substance, yet being unperfect*] R.V. **mine unperfect substance.** The word (*gōlem*) is a different one from that in *v.* 15, and denotes the undeveloped embryo. Cp. Aram. *gōlmā*, an unfinished vessel.

all my members] Lit. *all of them*, which A.V. and R.V. interpret to mean all the members into which the embryo was to develop. But it is better (cp. R.V. marg.) to regard the pronoun as anticipatory, and to render,

And in thy book were all of them written,

Which in continuance were fashioned, when *as yet there was* none of them.

17 How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God:
How great is the sum of them!

18 *If* I should count them, they are moe in number than the sand:
When I awake, I am still with thee.

19 Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God:

Even days which were formed,
When as yet there was none of them.

Each day of his life with all its history was pre-determined by the Creator and recorded in His book, before one of them actually was in existence:—a clear expression of the truth that there is an ideal plan of life providentially marked out for every individual. (Eph. ii. 10.)

The *Q'rē* or traditional reading of the Hebrew text, reads *lō*, 'for it' instead of *lō'* 'not' (see note on Ps. c. 3), giving the sense, *and for it there was one among them*: one of them was pre-ordained as 'its day,' the day of its birth. Cp. 'his day,' Job iii. 1.

17. To me then, who am the object of all this care, *how precious are thy thoughts, O God!* It is my delight to meditate upon the purposes of Thy Providence. **How vast are the sums of them!** There are, as it were, many items in that inexhaustible theme, each of which is immeasurable. Cp. xxxvi. 7; xcii. 5; Job xxvi. 14.

It is possible however that the word rendered *precious* means rather *incomprehensible, overwhelming*; and that the Psalmist is contrasting his knowledge of God with God's knowledge of him. 'Thou knowest all *my* thoughts and ways; but to me *Thy* thoughts are immeasurable and incomprehensible.'

18. *moe*] For this archaism cp. lxix. 4.

when I awake &c.] His last thoughts as he falls asleep are of God; and when he awakes, he finds himself still in His Presence, still occupied in contemplating the mystery of His Being. Cp. lxiii. 6. The Targum, "I awake in the world to come, and I am still with Thee"; and Symm. "I shall awake, and I shall be for ever with Thee," interpret the words of the resurrection, but this cannot be their original meaning.

19—24. But how can this omniscient God tolerate the existence of wicked men, who blaspheme and hate Him? With such the Psalmist will have no fellowship; and he concludes with a prayer that God will purify his heart, and lead him in the right way.

19. *Surely* &c.] Rather as R.V. marg., **Oh that thou wouldest slay the wicked.** The problem of the existence of evil perplexes him, as it perplexed Job (xxi. 7 ff.). Evil for him is no abstract idea; it is embodied in evil men. Will not God free His world from this insult to His government? **Cp. civ. 35.**

Depart from me therefore, ye bloody men.
For they speak against thee wickedly, 20
And thine enemies take *thy name* in vain.
Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? 21
And am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?
I hate them *with* perfect hatred: 22
I count them mine enemies.
Search me, O God, and know my heart: 23
Try me, and know my thoughts:
And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, 24

depart from me] lest I be tempted by your example and involved in your fate. Cp. vi. 8; cxix. 115.

ye bloody men] **Men of blood**, who do not shrink from violence and murder (v. 6; Prov. xxix. 10).

20. *For they speak against thee*] This rendering involves a questionable construction. That of R.V. marg. *utter thy name*, lit. *thee*, i.e. swear falsely by thy name, suits the parallelism, but is also doubtful. Most probably the word should be read with different vowels, **rebel against thee** (יַמְרוּךָ for יִמְרוּךָ); cp. lxxviii. 40.

thine enemies take thy name *in vain*] The text is difficult and perhaps corrupt. The word rendered *thine enemies* has this meaning in Aramaic, but not in Hebrew: *thy name* is not expressed: the verb is spelt anomalously. But slight alterations of the text would give the sense, *and take thy name in vain.*

21. *am not I grieved with*] **Do not I loathe**, as in cxix. 158.

22. The energy of the Psalmist's indignation seems to many readers to be a jarring note: yet it is but the limited and imperfect form in which he expresses his intense hatred of evil. "The duty of keeping alive in the human heart the sense of burning indignation against moral evil—against selfishness, against injustice, against untruth, in ourselves as well as in others,—that is as much a part of the Christian as of the Jewish dispensation." Stanley, *Lect. on Jewish Church*, I. p. 216 (Lect. xi), quoted by Kay.

23, 24. In no spirit of presumptuous self-confidence, but with an honest desire to be saved from self-deception and guided in the way of true life, the Psalmist ends by inviting and welcoming that Divine scrutiny which he knows to be a fact and from which he cannot escape (*vv.* 1 ff.), and praying for that Divine guidance which is indispensable for him.

23. *Search me* &c.] God has searched him and knows him (*v.* 1): but he will welcome the continuance of that piercing scrutiny, not seek to avoid it. Cp. xxvi. 2.

24. any *wicked way*] Lit. *any way of grief*, or *pain*; conduct which leads to suffering and ruin. Some critics, comparing Is. xlviii. 5, explain *way of idolatry*, in contrast to *the way of Jehovah* (xxv. 4), but there is no hint that this was the special danger of the Psalmist.

And lead me in the way everlasting.

the way everlasting] A way of life (xvi. 11; Prov. xii. 28) and peace (Is. lix. 8), the opposite to the way of ruin and death. See i. 6; xxv. 4, 5; Jer. xxi. 8. Whether the Psalmist's view was limited to this world, or whether he saw that such a way must lead on to fuller life after death, cannot be decided with certainty. Some render *the ancient way*, and follow the Targum in explaining it to mean the good old way in which the godly men of former ages walked (cp. Jer. vi. 16; xviii. 15); but this sense is less obvious.

PSALM CXL.

Psalms cxl—cxliii form a group distinguished by external and internal characteristics.

(1) All bear the name of David: three are entitled '*a Psalm* [*Mizmor*] of David,' a designation comparatively rare in Books IV and V; and one is entitled '*Maschil* of David,' a designation which occurs nowhere else in these books. Ps. cxlii is the only Psalm in these books which has a title indicating the occasion to which it is supposed to refer. Ps. cxl is inscribed *For the Precentor*, which is only found twice again in these books. *Selah* occurs three times in cxl and once in cxliii, but nowhere else in these books. These external characteristics suggest that these Psalms may have been derived from some source in which such terms and notes were common, as they are in the earlier books.

(2) They are marked by a general similarity of thought and language. Compare especially cxli. 1, cxlii. 1, cxliii. 1, cxl. 6: cxlii. 3, cxliii. 4: cxlii. 7, cxliii. 11: cxl. 5, cxli. 9, cxlii. 3: cxl. 9, cxli. 10.

(3) They appear to reflect the same or similar circumstances. In cxl we see the Psalmist exposed to the plots of merciless and unscrupulous enemies, who are endeavouring to ruin him by calumny and slander; in cxli we watch him struggling against the temptation to sacrifice principle and cast in his lot with the godless party; in cxlii his utter solitude and helplessness are pathetically described; in cxliii his situation has become even more desperate: all will soon be over if he is not speedily rescued from the hands of his persecutors.

It is then not improbable that they were composed by the same author. This author however can hardly have been David. While it would be rash to affirm that all the Psalms of David must have been included in earlier collections incorporated in the Psalter, these Psalms lack the marks of originality. They are full of reminiscences of earlier Psalms, some of which, e.g. Ps. lxxvii, are of comparatively late date, and probably they shew traces of familiarity with Job and Proverbs. They may have the name of David prefixed to them because they were taken from a collection bearing the name of David, or because they were recognised as imitations of Psalms believed to be his. Delitzsch supposes that they were "dramatic lyrics," written to illustrate episodes in the life of David, and originally stood in some historical work, from which they were transferred to the Psalter. But dependent as they are upon earlier Psalms for their language, they have a vigour and

pathos of their own which points to their having sprung from the actual experience of the author.

Who he was or in what period he lived cannot be determined. The times of Manasseh's persecution; the Exile; the post-exilic period, have been suggested; and on the whole it seems most probable that the Psalms reflect the persecution of earnestly-minded religious men by a worldly and unscrupulous party at some time in the unsettled circumstances of this later period.

Some critics suppose that the speaker in these Psalms is not an individual, but the nation; but though some phrases favour this view, the poet's utterances seem to be inspired by the reality of personal experience, and the ascription of the Psalms to David shews that at the time of their incorporation in the Psalter they were regarded as personal.

The structure of Ps. cxl is regular. It consists of four stanzas of six lines each, the second containing two verses, the others three; and a concluding stanza of four lines.

i. The Psalmist prays to be preserved from the plots of arrogant and unscrupulous enemies, who are endeavouring to ruin him by virulent calumny and treacherous plots (1—3).

ii. He repeats his prayer, with further description of the treacherous character of his enemies' schemes under the usual figure of snares and traps (4, 5).

iii. Further prayer that these plots may fail (6—8),

iv. and that retribution may overtake their authors (9—11).

v. Concluding expression of confidence in Jehovah's guardianship of the righteous (12, 13).

Compare generally Psalms vii, lviii, lxiv.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

Deliver me, O LORD, from the evil man: 140
Preserve me from the violent man;
Which imagine mischiefs in *their* heart; 2
Continually are they gathered together *for* war.
They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; 3

1—3. Prayer for deliverance from the machinations of calumnious enemies.

1. *the evil man...the violent man*] Both words may be collective; *evil men...men of violent deeds*: but the second may single out a particular individual as the leader of the treacherous hostility of which the Psalmist complains. For the phrase *man* or *men of violent deeds* (plur.) cp. *v.* 4 and 2 Sam. xxii. 49; *v.* 11 and Ps. xviii. 48 have the sing., *violence*.

2. **Who have devised evils** *in* their *heart*] Secretly and deliberately. *continually* &c.] **Every day do they stir up strife**: lit. *wars*. They are perpetually trying to pick a quarrel with me.

3. *They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent*] The lying tongue is elsewhere compared to the sword or arrow which wounds

Adder's poison *is* under their lips. Selah.

4 Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked;
Preserve me from the violent man;
Who have purposed to overthrow my goings.
5 The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords;
They have spread a net by the way side;
They have set grins for me. Selah.

6 I said unto the LORD, Thou *art* my God:
Hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD.
7 O GOD the Lord, the strength of my salvation,
Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.

(lii. 2; lv. 21; lvii. 4; lix. 7; lxiv. 3), or the serpent which inflicts a poisonous bite (lviii. 3, 4); and here the Psalmist combines the metaphors. They deliberately prepare to inflict a deadly wound by slander.

adder's poison is *under their lips*] Hidden like the poison gland of the asp. The words are quoted in Rom. iii. 13, from the LXX.

4, 5. Repeated prayer for deliverance from their plots.

4. *to overthrow my goings*] To trip me up and overthrow me. Cp. cxviii. 13. R.V. to thrust aside my steps.

5. For the figures cp. xxxi. 4; cxix. 110; cxli. 9; cxlii. 3. The hunter sets his snares in the 'run' of the animal he wishes to catch, and the Psalmist's enemies are scheming to ruin him as he goes about his daily duties. Cp. Matt. xxii. 15, "how they might ensnare (παγιδεύσωσιν, cp. LXX παγίδα here) him in talk." He calls them *proud*, for their hostility to God's servant is virtually a defiance of God (x. 2).

grins] More properly, baits or lures, to entice him to his ruin. *Grins*, the original reading of the A.V. of 1611, restored by Scrivener, is an obsolete word of the same meaning as *gins*, which has been substituted for it in modern editions of the A.V. here and in cxli. 9. For examples of its use see Wright's *Bible Word Book*.

6—8. Appeal to Jehovah, the Helper in time of need.

6. *I said*] I have said, or, I say. Cp. xvi. 1; xxxi. 14. In his distress he appeals to Jehovah, pleading the relation which entitles him to expect protection. Cp. lxiii. 1; cxliii. 10.

hear] R.V., Give ear unto.

7. *O GOD the Lord*] Jehovah, Lord. Cp. cix. 21 (note); cxli. 8.

thou hast covered my head] Protected it as with a helmet. Cp. lx. 7; Is. lix. 17; Eph. vi. 17; 1 Thess. v. 8. The perfect tense might refer to past experience, but is probably to be taken as a perfect of certainty: *thou wilt assuredly cover*.

the day of battle] Lit. *of armour*, when armour is needed. The language is of course figurative, for the 'war' which his enemies were making upon him was carried on with the weapons of slander and calumny.

Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked: 8
Further not his wicked device;
Lest they exalt themselves. Selah.

As for the head of those that compass me about, 9
Let the mischief of their own lips cover them.
Let burning coals fall upon them: 10
Let them be cast into the fire;
Into deep pits, *that* they rise not up again.
Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth: 11
Evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow *him*.

I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the 12
afflicted,
And the right of the poor.

8. *further not his* **evil** *device*] Suffer it not to issue in success.

lest *they exalt themselves*] The construction is harsh, whether we render thus, or, 'for then *will they exalt themselves*,' and probably the word belongs to the next verse.

9—11. May retribution overtake my enemies!

9. A word seems to be wanting at the beginning of the verse, and if the last word of *v.* 8, with the change of a single letter (יריכמו for ירומו), is prefixed to this verse, it reads, *When those that compass me about lift up the head, let the mischief* &c. Let the mischief they are trying to do me by slander and calumny recoil upon themselves, and overwhelm them. Cp. cxli. 10.

10. Let the fate of Sodom overtake these defiant offenders! Possibly we should read, comparing xi. 6, *May he rain hot coals upon them! may he cast them into the fire!*

deep pits] A word of uncertain meaning, found here only. Some render *whirlpools*: cp. R.V. marg. *floods*. If they try to escape the fiery storm, may they be swept away by torrents!

that *they rise not up again*] Let their fall be final and irremediable (xxxvi. 12), in contrast to that of the righteous, who falls to rise again (Prov. xxiv. 16).

11. A slanderer shall not be established in the land] Cp. ci. 5.

to overthrow him] Again the idea is that of the evil which he devises for others relentlessly pursuing him, lit. *with thrust upon thrust*. Cp. xxxv. 5, 6; Prov. xiii. 21. The Targ. paraphrases, "misfortune shall hunt the violent man; the angel of death shall drive him down to hell."

12, 13. The destiny of the righteous contrasted with the fate of the wicked.

12. Jehovah is the Judge Who rights the weak and oppressed. Cp. vii. 8, 9; ix. 4; &c.

13 Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name:
The upright shall dwell in thy presence.

13. *Surely*] The particle *'ak* expresses the thought, *Nay but after all*; in spite of present trials.

shall dwell in thy presence] In the land where Jehovah's Presence is especially manifested. Cp. cii. 28. The manifestation of God which is destruction to the wicked (ix. 3) is security and happiness to the upright. Cp. xi. 7, note; xvi. 11; lxxxix. 15.

PSALM CXLI.

The Psalmist prays that his prayer may be accepted as an evening sacrifice (1, 2); that he may be preserved from sin in word and thought and deed (3, 4), and welcome the reproof of the righteous rather than yield to the temptation to join the godless in their life of selfish ease and sensual enjoyment (5). When the leaders of the godless party have met with the fate which they deserve, their followers will listen to his teaching, but for the present the Psalmist and his friends are like a routed army, the bones of whose slain lie bleaching on the field of battle (6, 7). Yet even in this extremity he can look with patience to Jehovah for deliverance from the snares of his enemies, whose malice will bring about their own ruin (8—10).

Such is an attempt to trace the course of thought in the Psalm; but it must be admitted that while the meaning of *vv.* 1—5 and 8—10 is clear, *vv.* 6, 7 are in themselves obscure and stand in no clear connexion with the rest of the Psalm. Either these verses do not belong to the Psalm and have come into their present position by accident; or they are intentionally couched in enigmatic and figurative language, which is unintelligible without some knowledge of the events and circumstances to which they allude.

The use of this Psalm in the early Church at the beginning of the Evening Service, as Ps. lxiii was used at the beginning of the Morning Service, was naturally suggested by *v.* 2. It was called ὁ ἐπιλύχνιος ψαλμός, because the service was held at the time when the lamps were lighted. See Bingham's *Antiquities*, Book xiii. ch. 11, and the passages from the *Apostolic Constitutions* (ii. 59, viii. 35) there quoted.

A Psalm of David.

141 LORD, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me;
Give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.

1, 2. Introductory appeal for a favourable hearing.

1. *I cry unto thee*] Or, **I have called upon thee** (R.V.): he has already been praying, and now pleads for a speedy answer, *make haste unto me* (lxx. 5), i.e. make haste to help me (xxii. 19; xxxviii. 22; xl. 13).

Let my prayer be set forth before thee *as* incense; 2
And the lifting up of my hands *as* the evening sacrifice.
Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; 3
Keep the door of my lips.

2. *Let my prayer be set forth*] Lit. *be prepared, set in order.* The same word is used of the service of the Temple in 2 Chron. xxix. 35; xxxv. 10, 16. Or, *be presented, avail.*

incense] Either the daily offering of incense by the priests upon the altar of incense (Ex. xxx. 7, 8), or the 'sweet smoke' from the *azkārā* or 'memorial,' the portion of the meal-offering which was mixed with oil and frankincense and burnt upon the altar (Lev. ii. 2, see note on the title of Ps. xxxviii), may be meant. But in the only other passage in the Psalter in which the word 'incense' (*q'tōreth*) is used (lxvi. 15), it denotes the 'sweet smoke' of the sacrifice generally; and as in the next line the Psalmist mentions the evening oblation or meal-offering, he may be thinking of the burnt-offering of which the meal-offering was the accompaniment.

the lifting up of my hands] The gesture of prayer (xxviii. 2; lxiii. 4; 1 Tim. ii. 8), the outward symbol of an uplifted heart (xxv. 1).

as *the evening* oblation] *Minchāh* properly denotes the oblation or meal-offering which accompanied the daily burnt-offering (Ex. xxix. 38—42); but it may be used here to include the whole of the evening sacrifice (cp. 2 Kings xvi. 15; Ezra ix. 4, 5; Dan. ix. 21); or the burnt-offering may have been already alluded to (see preceding note) by the word 'incense.'

The *evening* sacrifice may be specially named because the Psalmist was in the habit of praying at that time (cp. Dan. ix. 21), and composed the Psalm for use as an evening Psalm.

The sweet smoke of the sacrifice or of incense rising towards heaven was a natural symbol of prayer ascending to God. Cp. Apoc. v. 8, where incense represents the prayers of the saints; and Apoc. viii. 3, 4, where the angel adds incense to the prayers of the saints. It would seem that the Psalmist lived at a time when the daily sacrifice was suspended, or at a distance from Jerusalem; but he had learnt that he could approach God as truly in prayer as if he were assisting at the daily sacrifice. Cp. Mal. i. 11. For the correspondence of prayer and sacrifice cp. Prov. xv. 8; Hos. xiv. 2; Ps. xix. 14, note.

3—5. Prayer for grace to resist the temptation to sin in word and thought and deed.

3. Cp. xxxiv. 13; xxxix. 1; Prov. xiii. 3; xxi. 23. The special point of the prayer is that he may be guarded from adopting the profane language of the ungodly men by whom he is surrounded. Cp. lxxiii. 8 ff. This verse is apparently quoted in Ecclesiasticus xxii. 27, "Who shall set a watch over my mouth?"

keep the door of my lips] Parallelism and construction suggest the reading, *a guard over the door of my lips.* For the figure cp. Micah vii. 5.

4 Incline not my heart to *any* evil thing,
To practise wicked works with men that work iniquity:
And let me not eat of their dainties.

5 Let the righteous smite me; *it shall be* a kindness:
And let him reprove me; *it shall be* an excellent oil,
Which shall not break my head:
For yet my prayer also *shall be* in their calamities.
6 When their judges are overthrown in stony places,

4. *Incline not my heart* &c.] Leave me not by the withdrawal of Thy grace, to turn aside from the path of right. Cp. Ps. cxix. 10, 133.

to practise &c.] **To occupy myself in wicked practices with men who are workers of iniquity.** The word for *men* implies that they are men of rank and position who set this bad example. Cp. iv. 2, note.

let me not eat of their dainties] Let me not share their life of sensual luxury, the means for which are procured by violence and injustice. Cp. Prov. iv. 17, "For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence": xxiv. 1, 2. There does not seem to be any allusion to participation in idolatrous sacrifices.

5. Let the righteous smite me, it shall be kindness:
And let him reprove me, it shall be as oil for the head;
Let not my head refuse it:
But still let my prayer be against their evil doings.

From the prayer of *v.* 4 it is clear that the Psalmist had felt the seductiveness of worldly luxury, and apparently (cp. *v.* 9) godless men had been endeavouring to entice him to cast in his lot with them. On the other hand it would seem that he had been tempted to resent the correction and reproof of the godly, possibly not always offered in the most conciliatory way. He therefore prays that he may welcome correction as kindness, and reproof as the "ointment and perfume" which "rejoice the heart" (Prov. xxvii. 9), alluding no doubt to the oil with which his head would have been anointed at the banquets of the wicked (Am. vi. 6). *Smite* is of course a metaphor for severe correction. Cp. Prov. xxvii. 6, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." The Book of Proverbs insists constantly on the value of reproof, which the wise man welcomes and the fool resents (iii. 11 f.; xiii. 18; xv. 5, 31, 32; xxviii. 23), and the duty of neighbourly reproof is enjoined in the Law (Lev. xix. 17). Cp. Eccl. vii. 5.

The last line is obscure, and the text is possibly corrupt, but the general sense may be, 'Let me not resent reproof, and associate with the wicked, but let me continue to pray against (or, in the midst of) their evil deeds.' Neglecting the Heb. accents we might render, *Let not my head refuse it, but again!* (i.e. let him repeat his reproofs), *and let my prayer be against their evil deeds.*

6, 7. It is not difficult to translate these verses, but it seems impos-

They shall hear my words; for they are sweet.
Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, 7
As when one cutteth and cleaveth *wood* upon the earth.

sible to give any satisfactory explanation of them in their present context. They may be rendered:

6. **When their judges have been thrown down by the sides of the cliff,**
   They (or **men**) **will hear my words, that they are sweet.**
7. **As when one splitteth and cleaveth** (**wood**) **upon the earth,**
   Our bones are scattered at the mouth of Sheol.

Precipitation from a rock was a common method of execution in ancient times (cp. 2 Chron. xxv. 12; Luke iv. 29), and the meaning would seem to be that when the judges or leaders of the "workers of iniquity" mentioned in *v.* 4 (for it is to them that the pronoun *their* must refer) have met with the fate they deserve, their followers (or people in general) will welcome the Psalmist's advice and exhortation. 'Judges' however, though it may mean 'rulers' (Mic. v. 1; Dan. ix. 12), is not a natural word to use for the leaders of a class or party. Must not the reference be rather to the corrupt judges by whose help the rich and powerful procured the condemnation and even the judicial murder of the poor and defenceless? Cp. Mic. vii. 2, 3.

Taken by itself the next verse would seem to describe a national disaster, some defeat after which the bodies of the slain lay unburied on the field of battle. Cp. liii. 5. But there is no hint of such a disaster in the rest of the Psalm, and we can only suppose that the Psalmist, when he uses the first person, '*our* bones,' is speaking on behalf of those with whom he is in sympathy, the godly who are the victims of persecution and oppression. While the wicked and their judges are still in power they are murdered, and their dead bodies call for vengeance; or, if the expression be taken as hyperbolical (cp. Mic. iii. 2, 3), they are deprived of all that makes life worth living, and are no better than bleaching skeletons, ready to be swallowed up by the greedy jaws of Sheol. Some MSS of the LXX, and the Syriac, read *their bones*, i.e. the bones of the judges who have been executed, but this is probably only a conjectural correction to get rid of the difficulty.

The meaning of the last line is uncertain. Most of the Ancient Versions (Aq. Symm. Jer. Targ. Syr.), and most modern commentators, render as R.V., *as when one ploweth and cleaveth the earth*, on the ground that this rendering is required by the usage of the language. In Aramaic and in cognate languages the first verb means to *plow, cultivate*: it comes from the same root as the modern Arabic *fellah*. But neither it nor the second verb is used in the O.T. in this sense, and the comparison of the bodies or bones of the slain to the clods or stones turned up by the plough is not an obvious one. On the other hand the second verb may certainly mean *to cleave wood* (Eccl. x. 9), and the first is used in 2 Kings iv. 39 of slicing up gourds; and the comparison of the scattered and bleaching bones of the slain to the

8 But mine eyes *are* unto thee, O GOD the Lord:
In thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute.
9 Keep me from the snare *which* they have laid for me,
And the grins of the workers of iniquity.
10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets,
Whilst that I withal escape.

splinters and chips made by the woodcutter at his work and left scattered and uncared for is forcible and graphic.

8—10. Concluding expression of confidence, with prayer for preservation and deliverance.

8. *But mine eyes*] The conjunction must be rendered **For**, which gives no sense in connexion with *v.* 7. It must introduce the reason for the prayers of *vv.* 1—4, or for the resolution to continue in prayer with which *v.* 5 ends. The impossibility of connecting *v.* 8 with *vv.* 6, 7 is an additional reason for thinking that these verses are misplaced.

mine eyes are *unto thee*] The attitude of expectant prayer. Cp. xxv. **15, note.**

O GOD the Lord] **Jehovah, Lord.** Cp. cxl. 7, and see note on cix. 21.

in thee is my trust] **In thee have I taken refuge.** He has put himself under Jehovah's protection, and appeals to Him on the ground of this relationship. Cp. ii. 12; vii. 1; lvii. 1, and many other passages.

leave not my soul destitute] Rather, as R.V. marg., *pour not thou out my life*, suffer me not to perish. Cp. Is. liii. 12. The figure is explained by the identification of life with the blood.

9. Cp. cxl. 4, 5.

grins] Rather, **baits** or **lures**, the sensual temptations by which they are endeavouring to entice him (*v.* 4). For *grins* see on cxl. 5.

10. *into their own nets*] Heb. *into his own nets*, i.e. each into his own net. "The enginer" is "hoist with his own petar." For the thought that the plots of the wicked recoil upon themselves cp. cxl. 11; vii. 15, 16; ix. 16.

withal escape] Lit. *pass on* unharmed, *at the same time* as they are caught in their own snare.

ADDITIONAL NOTE.

The P.B.V. of *vv.* 5—7 gives a striking example of the use which Coverdale made of S. Münster's version in revising his translation of 1535 for the 'Great Bible' of 1539 (see *Introd.* p. lxxiii), and also of the variations between the editions of the Great Bible.

Coverdale's version of 1535 is: "Let the rightuous (rather) smite me frendly, and reprove me: so wil I take it, as though he had poured oyle upō my heade: it shal not hurte my heade, yee I wil praye yet for their wickednesse. Their iudges stōble at the stone, yet heare they my wordes, y^{t} they be ioyfull. Oure bones lye scatered before y^{e} pytt, like as when one graueth and dyggeth vp the grounde."

In the Great Bible of 1539, reprinted in April 1540, the only change (with the exception of variations of spelling) is in *v.* 6, which runs: "Let theyr judges stomble in stony places: that they may heare my wordes, for they are swete."

But in the second Great Bible, also published in 1540, all the changes with which we are familiar in the P. B. V. have been introduced. The passage runs thus: "Let the ryghteous rather smyte me frendly and reproue me. But let not ther preciouse balmes: breake myne heed, yee, I wyll praye yet agaynste theyr wyckednesse. Lett theyr iudges be overthrowen in stony places: that they may heare my wordes: for they are swete. Our bones lye scatered before the pit, lyke as whē one breaketh and heweth wood upō yᵉ erth."

The substantial changes are all taken from Münster's version: "Percutiat me iustus in pietate atque redarguat me, oleum autem praecipuum non frangat caput meum: quia adhuc oratio mea contra mala eorum. Praecipitentur in locis petrosis iudices illorum, ut audiant sermones meos, quoniam suaves sunt. Sicut qui frangit et dissecat (ligna) in terra, dispersa sunt ossa nostra iuxta sepulchrum."

PSALM CXLII.

In profound despondency the Psalmist lays his trouble before Jehovah (1, 2), though Jehovah well knows all the circumstances of his life, and the dangers which beset him in his isolation and defencelessness (3, 4). Jehovah has been and is his only hope, and to Him he looks for deliverance which will enable him to give thanks publicly in the midst of rejoicing sympathisers (5—7).

The situation of the Psalmist is desperate. If *v.* 7 and cxliii. 3 are to be understood literally, he was an actual prisoner in a gloomy dungeon; but 'prison' may be only a figure for distress.

Some commentators suppose that the speaker is Israel, languishing in the prison of exile and despairing of return, but apart from the strongly personal tone of the Psalm, in *v.* 7 the Psalmist is distinguished from 'the righteous,' who must be (cp. cxli. 5) faithful Israelites. It is impossible to suppose that future converts to the worship of Jehovah are meant.

For *Maschīl*, which is only found here in Books IV and V, see *Introd.* p. xix. With *when he was in the cave* cp. the title of Ps. lvii. The cave of Adullam (1 Sam. xxii) or that of Engedi (1 Sam. xxiv) may be meant. For *a prayer* cp. the titles of Pss. xvii, lxxxvi, xc and cii, the subscription to Ps. lxxii, and Hab. iii. 1.

Maschil of David; A Prayer when he was in the cave.

I cried unto the LORD *with* my voice; 142
With my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication.
I poured out my complaint before him; 2
I shewed before him my trouble.

1, 2. The Psalmist's resolve to seek relief by laying his distress before Jehovah.

1. **Aloud to Jehovah will I cry;**
   Aloud to Jehovah will I make supplication:
2. **I will pour out before him my complaint;**
   My distress before him will I declare.

Aloud, lit. *with my voice*, not merely in silent prayer, but with cries which give relief to pent up feeling and express the intensity of distress.

3 When my spirit was overwhelmed within me,
Then thou knewest my path.
In the way wherein I walked
Have they privily laid a snare for me.
4 I looked *on my* right hand, and beheld,
But *there was* no man that would know me:
Refuge failed me;
No man cared for my soul.
5 I cried unto thee, O LORD:
I said, Thou *art* my refuge

Cp. iii. 4; xxx. 8; and for 'cry,' a word expressing the cry of need, anxiety, distress, cp. *v.* 5; xxii. 5; lxxvii. 1; cvii. 13, 19.

poured out my complaint] Cp. cii title; xlii. 4; lxii. 8.

3, 4. Jehovah knows his peril, and his loneliness.

3. When my spirit fainteth upon me, THOU knowest my path.
In the way wherein I must walk have men hidden a snare for me.

4. Look on the right hand and see, for I have none that acknowledgeth me:
There is no asylum left me; my soul hath none that careth for her.

Though he will tell Jehovah of his distress, he knows that, even if he has no human sympathisers, He at any rate (THOU is emphatic) knows it already. His spirit faints (lxxvii. 3; cxliii. 4; Jonah ii. 7) within him, literally *upon* him, for the spirit (as elsewhere the soul or heart) is distinguished from a man's whole 'self,' and regarded as acting upon him from without (cp. xlii. 4); he is in despair, but his comfort is that Jehovah knows the course which he must take (cxliii. 8), and the perils which beset him from treacherous enemies.

4. The Massoretic text reads the imperative *look...and see*. The rendering of P.B.V. and A.V. *I looked...and saw* (*beheld*) follows the LXX, Vulg., Syr., and Targ., but requires a change in the vocalisation of the Hebrew words. The indicative *I looked* is the more obvious reading; but the appeal to Jehovah, *look!* is more forcible. Cp. Lam. i. 11; ii. 20; v. 1.

on my *right hand*] Where his protector would be standing if he had one. Cp. xvi. 8; cix. 31; cx. 5; cxxi. 5. But there is no one to acknowledge him as his client (Ruth ii. 10, 19) and defend him. He has no asylum left: lit. *a place of flight is perished from me*. Cp. Job xi. 20; Jer. xxv. 35; Am. ii. 14.

With the last clause cp. Jer. xxx. 17, "Yonder is Zion, who hath none to care for her."

5—7. Reminding God of his devotion in past times, he prays for a speedy answer to his prayer.

5. *I cried...I said*] **I have cried...I have said.** The perfect tense

And my portion in the land of the living.
Attend unto my cry;
For I am brought very low:
Deliver me from my persecutors;
For they are stronger than I.
Bring my soul out of prison,
That *I* may praise thy name:
The righteous shall compass me about;
For thou shalt deal bountifully with me.

describes what he has done in the past and is still doing. For the form of expression *I have said* cp. cxl. 6; for *my refuge* (a different word from that in *v.* 4) see xci. 2; Jer. xvii. 17; &c.; for *my portion* see xvi. 5; lxxiii. 26; cxix. 57; Lam. iii. 24; for *in the land of the living* cp. xxvii. 13; cxvi. 9. He trusts that he "will not die but live and declare the works of the Lord."

6. A mosaic of phrases which occur elsewhere. Cp. xvii. 1; lxxix. 8; vii. 1; xxxi. 15; xviii. 17.

7. *Bring my soul out of prison*] Probably to be understood figuratively, 'bring my soul out of distress' (cxliii. 11). Cp. Is. xlii. 7, of the Exile; Ps. cvii. 10. But it may mean that he was actually in prison. Cp. cxliii. 3.

praise thy name] **Give thanks unto thy name**, as in cxl. 13.

the righteous shall compass me about] The loyal worshippers of Jehovah will gather round him to share in his thanksgivings. Cp. xxii. 22 ff. The meaning of the verb however is not certain, and some authorities, both ancient and modern, render, as in R.V. marg., *crown themselves because of me*, i.e. rejoice in my deliverance; but this explanation is improbable, as is also the rendering of the LXX, "the righteous will wait for me, till thou hast recompensed me." There were then some 'righteous' men left; the Psalmist was not so absolutely isolated as his complaint in *v.* 4 seemed to shew; but probably friends and sympathisers were in no position to help him in his present distress, and practically he was alone, like Elijah in the wilderness.

because thou dealest *bountifully with me*] Cp. xiii. 6.

PSALM CXLIII.

Jehovah's servant recognises that his sufferings are the merited punishment of sin, and pleads for a merciful hearing. The recollection of the manifestations of Jehovah's lovingkindness in ancient times makes him long for some fresh exhibition of His goodness (1—6).

He prays for a speedy answer, for direction, for deliverance, for instruction, and for the destruction of the enemies who are seeking to destroy him (7—12).

The Psalm consists of two equal divisions, separated by *Selah*, and in each of them the verses are arranged in pairs.

Much in the Psalm favours the view that the Servant of Jehovah who speaks is Israel, languishing in the prison of exile, or all but crushed out of existence by relentless enemies in one of the gloomy periods of its history after the Exile.

On the other hand much in the Psalm appears to be the prayer of an individual, and the title implies that at an early date it was assumed to be the utterance of an individual. If we are right in regarding the other Psalms of this group as personal rather than national, it will be natural to take the same view of this Psalm. The LXX adds to the title 'when his son [v.l. Absalom his son] was pursuing him.' But it is not specially appropriate to that occasion, and in this Psalm, even more than in the others of the group, the dependence on earlier Psalms is unmistakable. The second half in particular is almost entirely a mosaic of phrases taken from other Psalms.

As one of the seven "Penitential Psalms" (see note on Ps. cii) it is appointed for use on Ash Wednesday.

A Psalm of David.

143 Hear my prayer, O LORD,
Give ear to my supplications:
In thy faithfulness answer me, *and* in thy righteousness.
2 And enter not into judgment with thy servant:
For in thy sight shall no *man* living be justified.

1, 2. An appeal for mercy.

1. At first sight it seems inconsistent that the Psalmist should appeal to Jehovah's righteousness, and yet (*v.* 2) deprecate being put on his trial. But Jehovah's righteousness here denotes His unvarying conformity to His own character, that absolute perfection of dealing which is the perpetual expression of His unchanging Will. Similarly His faithfulness is the attribute which makes it impossible that He should be false to the covenant which He has made with His servants. And as He has revealed Himself as a God of mercy and forgiveness (Ex. xxxiv. 5—7), the Psalmist can boldly plead for a merciful answer on the ground of His righteousness and faithfulness. Cp. St John's words "He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins" (1 John i. 9); Ps. v. 8; xxxi. 1.

2. *enter not into judgment with thy servant*] Do not put me on my trial and pass sentence on me according to my deserts. For the phrase cp. Job ix. 32; xiv. 3; Is. iii. 14.

Thy servant is not a mere formal expression of humility: it denotes 'one who is devoted to Thy service,' and this relation is the ground of his plea. Cp. *v.* 12.

be justified] Rather, be righteous. Cp. cxxx. 3, and many passages in Job, where the truth of man's unholiness in the sight of God is emphasised, e.g. iv. 17; ix. 2; xv. 14; xxv. 4. St Paul quotes this passage freely in Rom. iii. 20, Gal. ii. 16, substituting *πᾶσα σὰρξ*, 'all flesh,' for *πᾶς ζῶν*.

For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; 3
He hath smitten my life down to the ground;
He hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.
Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; 4
My heart within me is desolate.
I remember the days of old; 5
I meditate on all thy works;
I muse on the work of thy hands.
I stretch forth my hands unto thee: 6
My soul *thirsteth* after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah.

3, 4. The reason for his prayer. The extremity of his present sufferings seems to be a proof that God is calling him to account and punishing him for his sins with strict severity.

3. Cp. vii. 5; lxxxviii. 3—6. The last line agrees verbatim with Lam. iii. 6.

in darkness] **In dark places**, as lxxxviii. 6, probably a figure for calamity, in which he is as it were buried alive. But it is possible (cp. cxlii. 7) that he was actually a prisoner.

as those that have been long dead] And so are forgotten alike by God and man (lxxxviii. 5). But the meaning may be *those who are dead for ever*, who will never return to life; lit. *dead of eternity*, cp. Jer. li. 39, 'sleep of eternity'=perpetual sleep; Eccl. xii. 5, 'house of eternity'=perpetual abode.

4. And my spirit has fainted upon me;
My heart within me is appalled.

my spirit &c.] Cp. cxlii. 3, note.

is desolate] Rather, **is appalled**, stupefied and paralysed at the apparent hopelessness of my position. Cp. Dan. viii. 27. "The root-idea of the word seems to have been *to be motionless*,—sometimes in the stillness of desolation, sometimes through amazement" (Driver on Dan. iv. 19).

5, 6. The thought of all that God wrought in ancient times makes him long for a fresh manifestation of His power.

5. Cp. lxxvii. 5, 11, 12. The recollection of God's wonderful works of old time deepens his despondency, as he ponders on the contrast; "a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things": yet it emboldens him to fresh prayer.

thy works...the work of thy hands] **Thy work...the doing of thy hands**, as in xcii. 4.

6. *I stretch forth*] R.V. **I spread forth.** Cp. xliv. 20; lxxxviii. 9; Lam. i. 17.

my soul thirsteth **for** *thee, as a* **weary** *land*] 'Thirsteth' or some similar verb must be supplied. Cp. lx. 1, from which the words are taken. As the parched land, wearied with long continued drought,

7 Hear me speedily, O LORD: my spirit faileth:
Hide not thy face from me,
Lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.
8 Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning;
For in thee do I trust:
Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk;
For I lift up my soul unto thee.
9 Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies:
I flee unto thee to hide me.
10 Teach me to do thy will; for thou *art* my God:
Thy spirit *is* good; lead me into the land of uprightness.

longs for refreshing rain, so he longs for a renewal of the old manifestation of God's goodness. Cp. lxviii. 9, note, for rain as an emblem of Divine blessing.

7—12. Prayer for speedy hearing, for guidance and deliverance, for the destruction of his enemies. The language is borrowed almost entirely from older Psalms.

7. From lxix. 17; cii. 2; xxvii. 9; lxxxiv. 2; xxviii. 1.

Hear me speedily] R.V. Make haste to answer me.

hide not &c.] For if God withdraws the light of His Presence, he will be like the dying or the dead.

8. *Cause me to hear* &c.] Possibly we should change a letter, and read as in xc. 14 satisfy me (הַשְׂבִּיעֵנִי for הַשְׁמִיעֵנִי).

in the morning] Let the dawn speedily end this dark night of calamity, and bring the sunshine of Thy lovingkindness to gladden my weary heart. Cp. xxx. 5; xlix. 14.

for in thee do I trust...for I lift up my soul unto thee] Cp. xxv. 2, 1.

cause me to know &c.] Teach me how to avoid the dangers which beset me (cxlii. 3), and to order my conduct according to Thy Will (1 Thess. iv. 1). Cp. xxv. 4; xxxii. 8; Ex. xxxiii. 13.

9. *Deliver me...from mine enemies*] As lix. 1; cp. xxxi. 15; cxlii. 6.

I flee unto thee to hide me] The general sense is probably right, though it can hardly be got out of the present text. The Heb. verb denotes *to cover* or *conceal*, but not *to hide* (intransitively). Some commentators suppose that *unto thee have I covered* may mean 'unto thee have I secretly confided my cause': others think that it may bear the sense given by the A.V. Neither explanation is satisfactory, and probably we should read, with the change of a single letter (חסתי for כסתי), *unto thee have I fled for refuge*. So the LXX πρός σε κατέφυγον.

10. *Teach me to do thy will*] Cp. xxv. 4, 5; xl. 8.

for thou art *my God*] Cp. xxxi. 14, and often; cxl. 6.

thy spirit is *good; lead me into the land of uprightness*] Better, though the construction is grammatically anomalous, **let thy good spirit lead me in a level land.** Cp. Neh. ix. 20, "Thou gavest also thy good

Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name's sake: 11
For thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.
And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, 12
And destroy all them that afflict my soul:
For I *am* thy servant.

spirit to instruct them." The geographical term 'level land' or 'plain country' (Deut. iv. 43) is here metaphorically applied to denote conditions of life free from the dangers and obstacles which now beset the Psalmist. Cp. xxvi. 12. Perhaps however we should read with the change of a single letter (ארח for ארץ) *in a level path*, as in xxvii. 11. Cp. Is. xxvi. 7, "The path for the righteous is plain: straight and level thou makest the way of the righteous."

11, 12. The Psalmist's confidence that God will deliver His servant. The verbs in these last two verses should be rendered as futures not imperatives.

11. For thy name's sake, Jehovah, wilt thou quicken me;
In thy righteousness wilt thou bring my soul out of distress:
12. And in thy lovingkindness wilt thou cut off my enemies,
And destroy all them that distress my soul,
For I am thy servant.

The prayer for 'life' is characteristic of Ps. cxix: see note on p. 705: cp. cxxxviii. 7. The plea *for thy name's sake* is found in xxv. 11, and often elsewhere. With *thou wilt bring my soul out of distress* cp. cxlii. 7.

12. Cp. liv. 5, "Cut them [my enemies] off in thy truth"; xciv. 23. Such a prayer breathes the spirit of the Old Testament and not of the Gospel. It is a harsh and discordant conclusion to a Psalm full of humble penitence, patient resignation, and persevering faith. But the enemies who are relentlessly persecuting Jehovah's servant to the death are the enemies of Jehovah; they are traitors to His kingdom who have forfeited their right to live; they give no quarter and deserve none themselves; if they triumph, Jehovah's faithfulness to His promises would seem to have failed and his lovingkindness to have been exhausted or defeated (lxxvii. 8, 9). For such hardened and impenitent offenders nothing remains but extermination.

for I am *thy servant*] And therefore entitled to claim Thy protection. Cp. *v.* 2; lxxxvi. 2, 4, 16; cxix. 17, and often.

PSALM CXLIV.

1. The Psalmist praises Jehovah as the Giver of victory (1, 2), and marvels that He Who is so great should condescend to care for man who is so insignificant and transitory (3, 4). He prays that Jehovah will appear and interpose on his behalf, for he is hard pressed by faithless and treacherous foreigners (5—8).

ii. A vow of thanksgiving for the victory which he is confident will be granted, and a repeated prayer for deliverance (9—11).

iii. A description of the peace and prosperity of Jehovah's people (12—15).

This Psalm is a compilation from Pss. xviii, viii, xxxix, civ, xxxiii, and apparently from some poem which has not been preserved. *Vv.* 12—15 might no doubt have been written by the compiler himself; but the general character of the Psalm, and the looseness of the connexion with the preceding verses make it tolerably certain that these verses also were borrowed.

The Psalm bears the name of David, partly perhaps from its similarity to Ps. xviii, and partly from the mention of David in *v.* 10. The LXX adds *against Goliath* to the title: comp. the Targum of *v.* 10, "from the evil sword of Goliath." But the compilatory character of the Psalm stamps it as a secondary production; and certain features in the language (especially in *vv.* 12—15) point to a late date. In *vv.* 1—11 some leader of the people speaks as its representative; in *vv.* 12—15 he associates his fellow-citizens with himself, and uses the first person plural.

A Psalm of David.

144 Blessed *be* the LORD my strength,
Which teacheth my hands to war,
And my fingers to fight:
2 My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer;
My shield, and *he* in whom I trust;

1, 2. Praise of Jehovah the Giver of victory.

1. *Blessed* be **Jehovah my rock**] From xviii. 46.

which teacheth my hands to war, and *my fingers to fight*] An expansion of xviii. 34 *a*. *Hands* and *fingers* are a common parallelism, but possibly *fingers* may refer particularly to the use of the bow. Cp. xviii. 34 *b*.

2. Cp. xviii. 2, 47, and notes there.

My goodness] Rather, **my lovingkindness**, a bold expression for *the God of my lovingkindness* (lix. 10, 17), to denote Jehovah as the sum and source of lovingkindness. A partial parallel may be found in Jonah ii. 8, but in view of the fact that the verse is almost wholly derived from Ps. xviii, it seems not improbable that we should read as in xviii. 1, *my strength* (חזקי for חסדי), or as in xviii. 2, *my cliff* (סלעי), which agrees better with the next epithet *my fortress* or **stronghold**.

my deliverer] Lit. *my deliverer for me*, as in 2 Sam. xxii. 2. In Ps. xviii *for me* is omitted.

my shield, and he *in whom* **I have taken refuge**] A somewhat awkward variation from the text in Ps. xviii, "my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield."

Who subdueth my people under me.

LORD, what *is* man, that thou takest knowledge of him? 3
Or the son of man, that thou makest account of him?
Man is like to vanity: 4
His days *are* as a shadow that passeth away.
Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and come down: 5
Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.
Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: 6
Shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them.
Send thine hand from above; 7
Rid me, and deliver me out of great waters,
From the hand of strange children;

who subdueth my people under me] The phrase resembles the text of 2 Sam. xxii. 48 (*who bringeth down*) more closely than that of Ps. xviii. 47 (*and led subject*, a different word from that used here). Instead of *my people* both texts read *peoples*, which is supported by some MSS and several Versions (Aq. Syr. Jer. Targ.) here. If Israel is the speaker, this reading must be adopted here, and the reference must be to the subjugation of neighbouring nations: but if the leader of the community is speaking, the more difficult reading 'my people,' which is supported by the LXX, may be right. The reference will then be to his success in overcoming internal dissensions (cp. "the strivings of my people," 2 Sam. xxii. 44) and the establishment of his authority.

3, 4. From the enthusiastic contemplation of Jehovah's goodness the Psalmist turns to reflect upon the character of the object of it. Man's insignificance and transitoriness enhance the marvel of God's gracious care for him.

3. A variation of viii. 4. Cp. 2 Sam. vii. 18.

4. *vanity*] Or, **a breath**, unsubstantial and evanescent (a different word from that in *vv.* 8, 11). Cp. xxxix. 5, 11; lxii. 9.

his days &c.] Cp. cii. 11; cix. 23; Job viii. 9; Eccl. vi. 12.

5—8. Prayer that God will appear in His majesty and deliver the Psalmist from his treacherous enemies.

5. The descriptions of xviii. 9, civ. 32 are turned into prayer.

6 **Lighten lightning, and scatter them:**
Send forth thine arrows, and discomfit them.

A variation of xviii. 14, corresponding again more closely to the text of 2 Sam. xxii. 15. *Them* must refer to the enemies who are in the Psalmist's mind, though he has not expressly mentioned them.

7. **Stretch forth thine hands from on high:**
Rescue me, and deliver me out of many waters, out of the hand of strangers.

From xviii. 16, 45, description being again changed to prayer. For *hands* some MSS and all Ancient Versions read *hand*. The word ren-

8 Whose mouth speaketh vanity,
And their right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood.
9 I will sing a new song unto thee, O God:
Upon a psaltery *and* an instrument of ten strings will I sing *praises* unto thee.
10 *It is he* that giveth salvation unto kings:
Who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.
11 Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children,
Whose mouth speaketh vanity,
And their right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood:

dered *rescue* is a word used in this sense only here and in *vv.* 10, 11 in the O.T., but common in Aramaic. It is an indication of the late date of the Psalm. *Great* or *many waters* are a figure for overwhelming dangers, here particularly the attacks of foreign enemies, or possibly the tyranny of foreign rulers.

8. *vanity*] i.e. falsehood: cp. xii. 2; xli. 6.

their right hand &c.] Uplifted in swearing a solemn oath. Cp. cvi. 26.

9—11. A promise to give thanks for the victory which he is confident will be granted, and a repetition of his prayer for deliverance.

9. From xxxiii. 2, 3.

O God] An imitation of the usage of the Elohistic Psalms of Books II and III. Nowhere else in Books IV, V is *Elohim* (God) used absolutely for Jehovah, except in Ps. cviii, which is directly taken from two Elohistic Psalms. See *Introd.* p. lv.

upon a psaltery and *an instrument of ten strings*] R.V. **upon a psaltery of ten strings.**

10. Cp. xviii. 50. *Who giveth salvation* (or *victory*) *unto kings* may be meant as a general truth not to be limited to Israel only (cp. xxxiii. 16), and *David his servant* may denote the typical ruler of Jehovah's people (cp. Ezek. xxxiv. 23); or the reference may be historical, *who* **gave** *victory...who* **rescued** *David.*

the hurtful (lit. *evil*) *sword*] i.e. from the calamity of war. The Targ. renders 'the evil sword of Goliath,' but the reference is quite general.

11. The repetition of the prayer of *vv.* 7, 8 follows naturally upon the mention of Jehovah's attributes in *v.* 10.

12—15. A description of the prosperity of Israel under the protection and blessing of Jehovah. Cp. generally Deut. xxviii. 2 ff.; xxx. 9.

The absolute dependence of the earlier verses upon existing Psalms makes it probable that these verses also are borrowed, though the poem from which they were taken is not preserved; and the absence of a clear grammatical connexion with the preceding verses makes this probability almost a certainty.

What the compiler intended the connexion to be (for considering the general character of the Psalm we need not doubt that he appended them himself) is much disputed.

That our sons *may be* as plants grown up in their youth; 12
That our daughters *may be* as corner stones, polished
after the similitude of a palace:
That our garners *may be* full, affording all manner of 13
store:

(1) The LXX (followed of course by the Vulg.) changes the pronouns to the third person, and makes *vv.* 12—14 describe the temporal prosperity of the enemies of Israel referred to in *v.* 11. "Whose mouth hath spoken vanity...whose sons are as young plants &c." *V.* 15 then describes the contrast between this temporal happiness and the true spiritual happiness which Israel possesses. 'Men call the people happy who have these things; (but truly) happy is the people whose God is the Lord.' This however can only be regarded as a conjectural alteration, and not as the true reading.

(2) It is possible to render, *We whose sons*, or (R.V.) *When our sons* &c., and to take *v.* 15 as the apodosis, but such a lengthy protasis as the whole of *vv.* 12—14 is awkward.

(3) The A.V., which follows Aq., Symm. and Jer., may give the right meaning. The goal to which the Psalmist looks forward as the end of deliverance from enemies is the happiness and prosperity of the nation. No doubt the construction is harsh, but it may be explained by the supposition that the Psalmist borrowed the description in *vv.* 12—14, and tacked it loosely on to the rest of his poem by the particle of relation or conjunction *asher*, without altering the construction of the passage to suit it.

12. *That our sons* may be **like plants well grown in their youth**] Cp. cxxviii. 3. *Plant* denotes a freshly planted sapling sending up its young shoots, LXX *νεόφυτα*, cp. Job xiv. 9. Vergil uses a similar comparison (*Aen.* IX. 674), "Abietibus iuvenes patriis et montibus aequos."

The word for *well-grown*, which may be used either of children (Is. i. 2, *nourished*) or of trees (Is. xliv. 14), is to be connected with *plants*; *in their youth* belongs to *sons*.

our daughters...**like corner pillars sculptured in the fashion of a palace**] The exact meaning is uncertain. If this rendering is right, it is natural to think of the *Caryatides*, the graceful female figures so commonly employed as columns in Greek architecture. 'Tall and stately' would be the ideas suggested by the comparison. But, as Delitzsch points out, the architecture of Syria and Palestine has never employed *Caryatides* either in ancient or modern times. On the other hand the corners of the large rooms in the houses of wealthy Orientals are commonly ornamented with carved work richly coloured and gilded. He would render *like richly coloured corners*, and supposes that the comparison refers to the bright dresses and rich ornaments worn by the women. Cp. 2 Sam. i. 24. This explanation is however less natural.

13. *all manner of store*] Lit. *from kind to kind*, every kind of produce. The word is an indication of the late date of the Psalm. It

That our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets:
14 *That* our oxen *may be* strong to labour;
That there be no breaking in, nor going out;
That *there be* no complaining in our streets.
15 Happy *is that* people, that is in such a case:
Yea, happy *is that* people, whose God *is* the LORD.

occurs elsewhere in the Heb. of the O.T. only in 2 Chron. xvi. 14; Ecclus. (Heb.) xxxviii. 28; xlix. 8 (?), but is common in Aramaic.

in our streets] Rather, **in our fields.**

14. *our oxen...strong to labour*] Both words are of uncertain meaning. (1) Most commentators follow the Ancient Versions in regarding the word *allūphīm* here as a variant form for *alāphīm*, 'oxen' or 'cattle.' Oxen, it is thought, are naturally mentioned after sheep. The participle *m'ṣubbālīm* is variously explained. As it is passive in form it can hardly mean *capable of bearing burdens, strong to labour* (A.V.); and as it is masculine, it can hardly mean *laden with young, pregnant.* It is not a natural expression for *fat* and *strong*, as the LXX, Aq., Symm. and Jerome render it, i.e. loaded with flesh. Most probably it means **well laden** (R.V.) with the produce of the fields which they draw home in carts.

(2) *Allūphīm* however may mean *chieftains* (cp. Zech. xii. 5, 6), and in Ezra vi. 3 the verb in Aramaic appears to mean *set up* or *firmly established.* In such a late Psalm it is quite possible that the word might be used in the sense it bears in Aramaic (cp. the word for *rescue* in *v.* 7), and the meaning *our chieftains firmly established* suits the context very well. It is of course to be connected with the remainder of the verse, and not with *v.* 13. If the leaders of the community are strong and their authority well established, the community will be in less danger of attacks from without.

no breaking in] No hostile invasion of the country: or, no breach in the city walls by which the enemy may enter (Neh. vi. 1).

nor going out] No *going forth* to surrender to the enemy (Am. iv. 3; 2 Kings xxiv. 12), or into captivity (Jer. xxix. 16): or no *sallying forth* to repel an attacking force.

no complaining in our streets] No *outcry* of citizens surprised by the enemy, or generally, no *cry of mourning* for disaster (Jer. xiv. 2; xlvi. 12), in our *broad places* (Jer. v. 1), the open space inside the city gates, which was the usual place of concourse for the citizens, where justice was administered, and business transacted.

15. Happy is the people of Jehovah's choice, to whom He shews such manifest tokens of His favour in temporal prosperity; and yet more truly happy are they in the spiritual blessing of having Jehovah for their God. He is the source and sum of all true happiness, temporal and eternal.

The second line is from xxxiii. 12, with the substitution of the later form of the relative pronoun *sh* for *asher.* See note on p. 739.

PSALM CXLV.

This noble doxology worthily heads the series of Psalms of praise with which the "Book of Praises" ends. "Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever," is the thought which it expands. It is addressed to Israel's God as the supreme King, whose kingdom is universal and eternal; it celebrates His majesty, greatness, and goodness; His providential care for all His creation; His constant love towards those who love and fear Him. Its most striking feature is its universalism. If Israel begins the chorus of praise (*v.* 1) it will not be content until all mankind join in it (*v.* 21). Jehovah's goodness embraces all His creation; and the whole of creation responds with its hymn of praise.

The speaker is Israel; or at any rate the Psalmist so completely identifies himself with the whole nation as to lose sight of the limitations of his own individual personality. The unceasing praise contemplated in *vv.* 1—4 is that of the nation, in which as one generation passes away, another takes up the strain to hand it on in turn to its successor.

The Psalms of this group (cxlv—cl) were evidently composed for liturgical use. They are connected by many similarities of thought and language, and probably belong to the same period. The Maccabaean age, to which Ps. cxlix has very commonly been referred, is excluded by the fact that, according to the newly-discovered Hebrew text of Ecclesiasticus (see p. 776), Pss. cxlvii and cxlviii were known to the author, and must at the latest be older than B.C. 180. The clearest indications of date seem to be furnished by Ps. cxlvii, which may have been written for the Dedication of the walls of Jerusalem under Nehemiah; and allusions in Ps. cxlvi may also be explained from the circumstances of that period. To this date then the whole group may best be referred. The times of Simon ben Johanan described in Ecclus. l. might also be suggested as a possible date, whether Simon I (B.C. 310—291) or Simon II (B.C. 219—199) is meant; but our knowledge of that period is extremely scanty.

For details see the introduction to each Psalm.

This is the only Psalm which bears the title *Tehillāh*, 'a Praise,' from which the Hebrew title of the whole Psalter *Tehillīm*, 'Praises' is derived. It is alphabetic in form, each verse of two lines beginning with a letter of the alphabet in regular order (see *Introd.* p. lxiv). The verse beginning with *Nūn* is wanting between *vv.* 13 and 14. It may have been omitted by the poet for some special reason, but hardly for that which the Talmud (*Berachoth* 4 *b*) assigns, viz. that the ill-omened words of Am. v. 2, "Fallen is the daughter of Israel," begin with *Nūn*. More probably it was accidentally lost. A *Nūn* verse is found in the LXX, but its genuineness is disputed. See notes on *v.* 13.

This Psalm has naturally been largely used for liturgical purposes. It is recited twice in the Daily Morning Service and once in the Evening Service of the synagogue. It is said in the Talmud (*Berachoth* 4 *b*) that "Whoever repeats it three times a day may be sure

that he is a child of the world to come." It was the Psalm at the midday meal in the ancient Church, and *vv.* 15, 16 form part of the grace which has been used in colleges for centuries. St Chrysostom speaks of the use of it in the Eucharistic service, especially on account of *v.* 15 (Bingham, *Antiq.* XV. v. 10). It is one of the Proper Psalms for Whitsunday; and it is especially appropriate for that festival, as celebrating the universality and eternity of the kingdom of God.

David's *Psalm of* praise.

145 (א) I will extol thee, my God, O king;
And I will bless thy name for ever and ever.
2 (ב) Every day will I bless thee;
And I will praise thy name for ever and ever.
3 (ג) Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
And his greatness *is* unsearchable.
4 (ד) One generation shall praise thy works to another,
And shall declare thy mighty acts.

1, 2. Cp. xxx. 1; xxxiv. 1, 3; and generally the doxology in 1 Chron. xxix. 10 ff.

1. *my God, O king*] Or, **my God the King.** He Who is Israel's God is the absolute, universal King. The phrase has a larger meaning than that of Ps. v. 2, *my King and my God.*

for ever and ever] Israel is probably the speaker; and Israel as the people of God is immortal (Hab. i. 12). Generation after generation (*v.* 4) will take up the unending chorus of praise. If it is an individual who speaks, we must suppose, with Delitzsch, that in his devotion to the eternal King he forgets his own mortality. For it is at least doubtful if, even late in the post-exilic period, the doctrine of a personal immortality of conscious and active blessedness was so clearly developed that the words could have been used originally in the sense in which the Christian uses them now. But, as Del. rightly remarks, the divinely implanted impulse of the soul to find its highest delight in the praise of its Creator is in itself a practical argument for a life after death.

3. There can be no worthier object of praise than Jehovah. The verse re-echoes xlviii. 1 *a*; xcvi. 4 *a*; Job xi. 7 ff.; Is. xl. 28.

greatly to be praised] Better, **exceeding worthy to be praised.** In most editions of the Prayer Book this verse reads *Great is the Lord, and marvellous, worthy to be praised.* The comma after *marvellous* does not appear in the MS annexed as the authoritative copy to the Act of Uniformity of 1662, but was wrongly introduced into the earliest printed copies by the printers, who failed to see that *marvellous* was an adverb, as in xxxi. 23.

4. *shall praise*] R.V. **shall laud**, as the word is a different one from that in *v.* 2. The verbs might be rendered as optatives: *let one generation laud...and declare* &c., but the rendering of the A.V. is preferable.

thy mighty acts] **of deliverance, xx. 6; cvi. 2.**

(ד) I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, 5
And of thy wondrous works.
(ו) And *men* shall speak of the might of thy terrible 6
acts:
And I will declare thy greatness.
(ז) They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great 7
goodness,
And shall sing of thy righteousness.

(ח) The LORD *is* gracious, and full of compassion; 8
Slow to anger, and of great mercy.

5. The glorious splendour of thy majesty
And all thy marvellous works shall be my theme.

Splendour, glory, majesty, are the attributes of God as King. Cp. *v.* 12; xxi. 5; civ. 1; xcvi. 6.

For the word rendered *shall be my theme*, lit. *I will busy myself with, discourse concerning*, see note on cv. 2.

thy wondrous works] The Heb. text reads *the matters* or *details* (דִּבְרֵי) *of thy marvellous works* (cp. lxv. 3; cv. 27); but the LXX represents a verb (יְדַבְּרוּ), so that the verse would run, *Of the glorious splendour of thy majesty do men talk, and of all thy marvellous works will I discourse.* This reading improves the rhythm, and makes the structure of the verse correspond exactly to that of *v.* 6. The further alteration of the first person in *vv.* 5*b*, 6*b* to the third in the LXX *they will discourse...they will declare* is unnecessary. *Worship* in P.B.V.=honour. Cf. Luke xiv. 10.

6. Jehovah, Who is "the great, mighty, and terrible God" (Deut. x. 17), manifests Himself not only in 'mighty acts' of deliverance (*v.* 4), but in 'terrible acts' of judgement, which inspire His enemies with terror, and His people with reverence. Cp. lxv. 5. *Might* is a different word from that in *vv.* 4, 12, and may be rendered *strength*, to bring out the connexion of the two words with the epithets *strong and mighty* in xxiv. 8.

thy greatness] So the *Q'rē*, as in *v.* 3. But the *K'thībh*, '*great deeds*,' suits the parallelism better. Cp. 1 Chr. xvii. 19, 21 (R.V.).

7. *They shall abundantly utter*] Lit. *pour forth* as a perpetual stream of praise, as in cxix. 171.

thy great goodness] Cp. xxxi. 19; Is. lxiii. 7.

shall joyfully sing *of thy righteousness*] i.e. God's faithfulness to His revealed character. Cp. cxliii. 1, note; li. 14.

8. Taken almost verbatim from Ex. xxxiv. 6, Jehovah's great revelation of Himself as a God of condescending grace and infinite compassion, Whose Will is love, and Whose wrath is only manifested in the last resort against the hardened and impenitent. Cp. ciii. 8; lxxxvi. 15; Joel ii. 13; Jonah iv. 2; Neh. ix. 17, 31.

of great mercy] Lit. *great in lovingkindness.*

9 (ט) The LORD *is* good to all:
And his tender mercies *are* over all his works.
10 (י) All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD;
And thy saints shall bless thee.
11 (כ) They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom,
And talk of thy power;
12 (ל) To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts,
And the glorious majesty of his kingdom.
13 (מ) Thy kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom,
And thy dominion *endureth* throughout all generations.

9. **Jehovah** is *good to all*] Not merely, as P.B.V., *unto every man*, but as the parallelism of the next line shews, to all creation.

tender mercies] **Compassions.**

10. *All thy works shall* **give thanks unto** *thee*] Responding to Jehovah's goodness and compassion. The works of creation are meant, which bear witness to the sovereignty of their Creator by their obedience to His laws, to His goodness by their manifold beauty, to His greatness by their immeasurable vastness and infinite variety.

thy saints] **Thy beloved**, or, **thy godly ones**; those who are the objects of Thy lovingkindness, or who reflect Thy character in their own. See Appendix, Note I.

11. *thy power*] **Thy might**, as in *vv.* 4, 12.

12. *his mighty acts*] Somewhat awkwardly, to our ideas, the Psalmist passes from the second person to the third. The LXX removes the difficulty by reading the second person; hence, through the Vulg., the P.B.V. "that *thy* power, *thy* glory, and mightiness of *thy* kingdom might be known unto men."

13. This verse is found also, in Aramaic, in Dan. iv. 3, cp. 34 (Aram. iii. 33, iv. 31).

an everlasting kingdom] Lit. a **kingdom of all the ages**, past alike and future. With the LXX βασιλεία πάντων τῶν αἰώνων, cp. 1 Tim. i. 17 τῷ βασιλεῖ τῶν αἰώνων, 'unto the king of the ages.' See also x. 16; xxix. 10; Ex. xv. 18; Jer. x. 10.

throughout all generations] *In* (or *over*) *generation and generation*, each successive generation.

The verse beginning with *Nūn*, which is missing in the Hebrew text, is thus supplied in the LXX and Versions dependent on it, and in the Syr.;

Faithful is the Lord in [all] his words,
And holy in all his works[1].

If this verse is genuine, it must have been lost at an early date, for it is

[1] πιστὸς Κύριος ἐν [πᾶσιν, א$^{c.a}$ RT] τοῖς λόγοις αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὅσιος ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ.

The Heb. found in the lower margin of one late Heb. MS

נֶאֱמָן יְהוָה בְּכָל־דְּבָרָיו וְחָסִיד בְּכָל־מַעֲשָׂיו

is probably only a re-translation from the LXX.

(ס) The LORD upholdeth all that fall, 14
And raiseth up all those that be bowed down.
(ע) The eyes of all wait upon thee; 15
And thou givest them their meat in due season.
(פ) Thou openest thine hand, 16
And satisfiest the desire of every living thing.
(צ) The LORD *is* righteous in all his ways, 17
And holy in all his works.
(ק) The LORD *is* nigh unto all them that call upon him, 18
To all that call upon him in truth.
(ר) He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: 19
He also will hear their cry, and will save them.
(ש) The LORD preserveth all them that love him: 20

not found in any of the later versions[1]. Against its genuineness it is argued that the first line is suggested by the occurrence of the word for 'faithful' (*nĕ'emān*) in the same position in cxi. 7*b*, and by the language of Deut. vii. 9, and that the second line is simply taken from *v.* 17. It may however be genuine. It is not likely that the *Nūn* verse was originally omitted: it was not necessary for the LXX to supply it: and the Psalm contains many imitations and is not free from repetitions.

14. *all that fall*] Or, *all that are falling*. But cp. xxxvii. 17, 24.

raiseth up] An Aramaic word, found in the Heb. of the O.T. only here and in cxlvi. 8.

15. The picture of God as the great householder distributing their portions to all His household is repeated from civ. 27. Cp. Matt. vi. 26. The next verse also is based upon civ. 28.

16. *satisfiest the desire of every living thing*] This rendering probably gives the right sense. Cp. civ. 28, on which it is based, "thou openest thine hand, they are satisfied with good." Cp. *v.* 19. The word rendered *desire* may however mean the *good will, favour* of God (cvi. 4): hence R.V. marg., *satisfiest every living thing with favour*.

17. *righteous*] True to His character. Cp. *v.* 7.

holy] So the LXX, ὅσιος, which is used of God in the N.T. in Rev. xv. 4; xvi. 5. But the word *chāsīd* as applied to God (here and in Jer. iii. 12 only) means *full of lovingkindness*, loving. See App., Note I.

18. *nigh unto all them that call upon him*] To answer and help. Cp. Deut. iv. 7; Ps. xxxiv. 18; cxix. 151.

in truth] The hypocrite finds no favour with Him. Cp. Is. x. 20; John iv. 23, 24.

19, 20. Fear and love are the inseparable elements of true religion. Fear preserves love from degenerating into presumptuous familiarity: love prevents fear from becoming a servile and cringing dread.

[1] The verse is given in Lagarde's ed. of Jerome's Version; but it is not found in some good MSS and is obelised in others, and is probably an interpolation from the Vulg. with which it agrees exactly.

But all the wicked will he destroy.
21 (ת) My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD:
And let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

20. *all the wicked will he destroy*] See note on cxliii. 12. The victory of good must ultimately involve the defeat and destruction of evil.

21. Israel's own resolution is fixed; but nothing less can satisfy its aspirations than a universal and unending chorus of praise from all mankind, evoked by the revelation of His absolute and perfect holiness.

PSALM CXLVI.

This Psalm is "the praise of Jehovah as the one true Helper." Israel is warned against putting its trust in men, however powerful they may seem for the moment to be—a warning demanded perhaps by the particular circumstances and tendencies of the time—and reminded of the privileges it enjoys in the guardianship of Jehovah, the celebration of Whose power, beneficence, and eternal dominion forms the main subject of the Psalm.

It is the first of the five 'Hallelujah Psalms' with which the Psalter ends, and it has several points of contact with Psalm cxlv[1].

To this and the three following Psalms (cxlv—cxlviii of LXX = cxlvi—cxlviii of Heb., cxlvii being divided), the LXX prefixes the title *of Haggai and Zechariah*, as it does to Ps. cxxxviii. Whether this title represents some tradition, or was simply a conjecture from the use of these Psalms in the services of the Second Temple, is quite uncertain. They can however hardly be earlier than the time of Nehemiah, to the circumstances of which Ps. cxlvii and *vv.* 3, 4 of this Psalm may refer.

The use of Pss. cxlvi—cl in the daily Morning Service of the Synagogue is of great antiquity, though not, according to Dr Schiller-Szinessy, so ancient as that of Ps. cxlv.

146 Praise ye the LORD.
Praise the LORD, O my soul.
2 While I live will I praise the LORD:
I will sing *praises* unto my God while I have *any* being.

1. *Praise ye* Jah] Hallelujah! See note on civ. 35. The words are omitted in P.B.V. as belonging to the title rather than to the Psalm.

praise Jehovah, *O my soul*] Cp. *Bless Jehovah, O my soul*, ciii. 1, 22; civ. 1, 35. In this and the following verse the worship of the congregation is individualised: the Psalmist speaks for himself, and offers to each worshipper words wherewith to stir himself up to praise, and to express his purpose.

2. Almost identical with civ. 33.

[1] Cp. *v.* 2 with cxlv. 2; *vv.* 5, 7 with cxlv. 15; *v.* 8 with cxlv. 14; *v.* 10 with cxlv. 13

Put not your trust in princes, 3
Nor in the son of man, in whom *there is* no help.
His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; 4
In that *very* day his thoughts perish.
Happy *is he* that *hath* the God of Jacob for his help, 5
Whose hope *is* in the LORD his God:
Which made heaven, and earth, 6
The sea, and all that therein is:
Which keepeth truth for ever:
Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: 7
Which giveth food to the hungry.

3, 4. The central thought of the Ps., expressed in *vv.* 5 ff., is prefaced by a warning against the temptation to rely upon the favour and protection of men, however powerful. Princes to-day, they may be dust to-morrow; and their loftiest schemes crumble into dust with them.

3. Cp. cxviii. 8, 9, and see notes there for illustration of the kind of circumstances which may have suggested the warning. Cp. also Jer. xvii. 5 ff. Heathen princes doubtless are meant. It is possible that a party in Jerusalem was advocating a foreign alliance.

in whom there is *no help*] Or, *salvation*. Cp. xxxiii. 16; lx. 11 (=cviii. 12) and note.

4. Cp. Ps. civ. 29; Is. ii. 22.

to his earth] The 'ground' (*ădāmāh*) from which he was taken and of which his name (*ādām*='man') reminds him.

his thoughts] Or, *purposes*. The word is common in Aramaic, but occurs here only in the Heb. of the O.T.

The author of 1 Macc. appears to have had both this passage and civ. 29 in his mind when he wrote (ii. 63), "To-day he will be exalted, and to-morrow he will not be found, because he is returned to his dust, and his thought is perished."

5. Happy is he, whose help is the God of Jacob;
Whose hope resteth upon Jehovah his God.

Cp. xxxiii. 12; cxliv. 15; xx. 1. The word for *hope* is Aramaic, and is found elsewhere only in cxix. 116: the cognate verb is used in cxlv. 15 (A.V. *wait*).

6. The omnipotence and faithfulness of Jehovah are contrasted with the frailty and transitoriness of man (*vv.* 3, 4). For similar references to the power of Jehovah manifested in creation as a ground for trusting Him see cxxi. 2; cxxiv. 8; cp. Neh. ix. 6; Acts iv. 24.

all that in them *is*] In heaven and earth and sea; all being wherever found. Cp. Ex. xx. 11.

7. Illustrations of Jehovah's beneficent action, not without allusion to the circumstances of Israel. Observe how these Divine works were literally manifested in Christ's miracles. 7 *a* is abbreviated from ciii. 6; with 7 *b* cp. cvii. 9.

The LORD looseth the prisoners:
8 The LORD openeth *the eyes of* the blind:
The LORD raiseth them that are bowed down:
The LORD loveth the righteous:
9 The LORD preserveth the strangers;
He relieveth the fatherless and widow:
But the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.
10 The LORD shall reign for ever,
Even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations.
Praise ye the LORD.

the LORD &c.] Five times the name of Jehovah stands emphatically at the beginning of the line, to shew that it is He and no other Who does all these things. Prison may be a figure for exile, or for suffering generally (cp. cvii. 10, 14). Releasing from prison and giving sight to the blind are coupled together in Is. xlii. 7; lxi. 1, "to prisoners opening of eyes."

8. Blindness is a figure for moral and spiritual ignorance and insensibility, and helplessness in general. Cp. Is. xxix. 18; xxxv. 5; Deut. xxviii. 29; Job xii. 25; Is. lix. 9, 10.

raiseth up *them that are bowed down*] As cxlv. 14.

loveth] And therefore, as P.B.V., *careth for* them. But is not this an accidental mistake, introduced into the Great Bible of 1540? Coverdale (1535) and the Great Bible of 1539 have *loveth*.

9. As in xciv. 6 the sojourners[1] or resident aliens who had no rights of citizenship, orphans, and widows are typical examples of defencelessness. They are therefore specially under Jehovah's protection, and are commended in the Law to the care of the Israelites.

relieveth] R.V. upholdeth.

turneth upside down] Lit. as R.V. marg., *maketh crooked*; turns aside from its goal, so that it leads to destruction. Cp. i. 6. That which they would fain do to innocent men (cxix. 78) He does to them.

10. Cp. Ex. xv. 18. Such is Jehovah, Zion's God: and His reign is eternal, not transitory, like the dominion of earthly princes (*vv.* 3, 4). Cp. cxlv. 13.

PSALM CXLVII.

This spirited Psalm of praise for the restoration of Jerusalem consists of three divisions, each beginning with a fresh call to praise.

i. Praise Jehovah the Restorer of Jerusalem, the omnipotent and omniscient Ruler of the universe, the moral Governor of the world (1—6).

[1] The LXX regularly renders *gēr*, 'sojourner,' by προσήλυτος; but this does not mean 'proselyte' in the later technical sense of "a Gentile who through circumcision and observance of the law had been admitted into full religious fellowship with Israel," but, as the Vulg. renders it here, 'advena.' See Schürer's *Hist. of Jewish People*, § 31, E. T. II. ii. 315.

ii. Praise Him for His beneficent Providence towards all His creatures, and acknowledge that He delights not in physical strength but in reverent trust (7—11).

iii. Praise Him for peace and prosperity. He who controls the forces of Nature has given Israel the revelation of His law which distinguishes it from every other nation (12—20).

The thoughts of Jehovah's special goodness to Israel, of His power and beneficence manifested in Nature, and of His moral government of the world are intertwined. As in the other Psalms of this group, thoughts and language are largely borrowed, especially from Ps. xxxiii, Isaiah xl ff., and Job; but they are recast into a new and vigorous song, breathing the spirit of hearty thanksgiving evoked by some special event. It must have been written at a time when Jerusalem was enjoying special tokens of the restoration of Jehovah's favour; and it is a not improbable conjecture that it was composed for the Festival of the Dedication of the walls of Jerusalem celebrated by Nehemiah (Neh. xii. 27—43). After the completion of the walls of Jerusalem Nehemiah summoned the Levites settled in the neighbourhood to assemble at Jerusalem. The Priests and Levites purified themselves, and then purified the people, and the gates, and the wall. Two processions were formed of the Priests and Levites with the princes of Judah: one accompanied by Ezra went to the right, the other accompanied by Nehemiah went to the left. On the east of the city the processions met, and went to the Temple, where sacrifices were offered in the midst of general rejoicings.

Whether the Psalm was composed for this or for some similar occasion at a later time, for example in the high-priesthood of Simon ben Johanan, who, like a second Nehemiah, restored the walls of Jerusalem (Ecclus. l. 4), cannot be decided, but at any rate it may serve to illustrate the feelings of the time. Neh. ix. 5, 6 is in full accord with the spirit of this group of Psalms.

In the LXX the Psalm is divided into two; *vv.* 1—11 forming cxlvi, and 12—20 forming cxlvii, in the LXX numbering; and the title *Alleluia; of Haggai and Zechariah*, is prefixed to both.

Praise ye the LORD: 147
For *it is* good to sing *praises* unto our God;
For *it is* pleasant; *and* praise is comely.

1—6. Praise Jehovah, the restorer of Israel, the sovereign ruler of the world.

1. The text of this verse seems to be in some confusion. The *Hallelujah*, which ought, as in the other Psalms of this group, to stand by itself as the summons of the precentor to the congregation (see on civ. 35), here forms part of *v.* 1, the construction of which is otherwise awkward and anomalous. The LXX reads both *Alleluia* and *Praise ye the Lord*, as in cxlviii. 1; and it is probable that the verse should read thus:

Hallelujah.
Praise ye Jehovah, for it is good:

2 The LORD doth build up Jerusalem:
He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.
3 He healeth the broken in heart,
And bindeth up their wounds.
4 He telleth the number of the stars;
He calleth them all *by their* names.
5 Great *is* our Lord, and of great power:
His understanding *is* infinite.

Make melody to our God, for it is pleasant;
Praise is comely.

or, **for he is good...he is gracious** (lit. *pleasant*, cp. xxvii. 4). Cp. cxxxv. 3, on which this verse is based: line 3 is from xxxiii. 1.

2, 3. Jehovah's goodness to Jerusalem.

doth build up] The restoration and repeopling of the city generally are meant, not merely the reconstruction of its houses and walls. It is regarded as a continuous process, still in progress.

he gathereth together &c.] Cp. Deut. xxx. 1—4; Is. lvi. 8; xi. 12; Neh. i. 9.

This verse is imitated in the hymn in the Hebrew text of Ecclesiasticus li. 12 (6, 7). See p. 776.

3. Cp. Is. lxi. 1; Hos. vi. 1. Israel, crushed with grief and despair, wounded with sorrow and shame in its exile, is meant. Nehemiah's feelings (i. 4; ii. 3) represent those of every true Israelite. Cp. Ps. cxxxvii. Possibly the further thought is implied that sorrow had wrought contrition (li. 17) and made restoration possible.

4, 5. An imitation of Is. xl. 26, 28. Jehovah's omniscience and omnipotence are partly a ground for praise, partly an encouragement to trust Him. Cp. cxlvi. 6. He who knows each separate star will not lose sight of one single Israelite.

He telleth &c.] Either simply, **he counteth the number of the stars**, which to man seem innumerable (Gen. xv. 5): or, **he appointeth a number for the stars**, i.e. as in Is. xl. 26, "he bringeth out their host by number," marshals them in order like a well disciplined army.

he calleth them all by their *names*] **He giveth them all names**; i.e. He knows them individually. The original passage in Is. xl. 26, "calleth them all by name," taken in connexion with the preceding clause, means rather that He summons them as the soldiers of an army are summoned when the roll is called.

5. *Great* is *our Lord, and* **abundant** *in power*] The language is borrowed from Is. xl. 26.

his understanding is *infinite*] Lit. *to his understanding there is no number*, it is incalculable. *Number* is substituted for *searching* of Is. xl. 28, perhaps to suggest a contrast to *v.* 5. He numbers the stars: His wisdom cannot be numbered. The Heb. of Ecclus. xxxix. 20 "Is there any *number* [i.e. limit] to his salvation" [or according to Schechter's conjecture, *understanding*] may be borrowed from this passage.

The LORD lifteth up the meek:
He casteth the wicked down to the ground.
Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving;
Sing *praise* upon the harp unto our God:
Who covereth the heaven with clouds,
Who prepareth rain for the earth,
Who maketh grass to grow *upon* the mountains.
He giveth to the beast his food,
And to the young ravens which cry.
He delighteth not in the strength of the horse:
He taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.
The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him,
In those that hope in his mercy.

6. Jehovah's power is manifested in His moral government of the world. Cp. cxlvi. 9. Though the language is general, it has obviously a special reference to the restoration of Israel and the humiliation of their oppressors.

lifteth up] Or as R.V. **upholdeth**, the same word as in cxlvi. 9.

the meek] Those who have learnt humility in the school of suffering.

casteth...down] Or, **abaseth**.

7—11. A renewed call to praise Jehovah for His beneficence, and to recognise the conditions of His favour.

7. *sing* praise] **Make melody unto our God with harp**, as xcviii. 5 *a*.

8. Cp. civ. 13, 14.

upon *the mountains*] Without man's care and cultivation.

The LXX adds καὶ χλόην τῇ δουλείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων from civ. 14, Vulg. 'herbam servituti hominum,' which appears in P.B.V. as *and herb for the use of men*.

9. Cp. cxlv. 15; Job xxxviii. 41; Luke xii. 24. Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 200, denies that there is any foundation for the notion that the raven turns its young out of the nest at so early a period that they are unable to provide for themselves. Perhaps the raven's croak struck the Psalmist especially as an importunate cry.

10, 11. Based upon xxxiii. 16—18. Jehovah's delight is not in physical strength, but in reverent trustfulness;—a thought of consolation, parallel to *v.* 6. Israel might look regretfully back to its ancient military power, or envy the forces of neighbouring nations; but it is by spiritual strength that its victories are to be won. The horse is the warhorse (Job xxxix. 19): the man is the warrior, for whom strength and swiftness of foot were indispensable qualifications. Cp. xx. 7; xviii. 33; Am. ii. 14, 15: and the standing epithet in Homer for Achilles, "swift of foot."

11. *those that hope in his mercy*] Or, *those that wait for his loving-kindness*.

12 Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem;
Praise thy God, O Zion.
13 For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates;
He hath blessed thy children within thee.
14 He maketh peace *in* thy borders,
And filleth thee *with* the finest of the wheat.
15 He sendeth forth his commandment *upon* earth:
His word runneth very swiftly.
16 He giveth snow like wool:
He scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes.
17 He casteth forth his ice like morsels:
Who can stand before his cold?
18 He sendeth out his word, and melteth them:
He causeth his wind to blow, *and* the waters flow.
19 He sheweth his word unto Jacob,
His statutes and his judgments unto Israel.
20 He hath not dealt so with any nation:

12—20. Zion is summoned to praise Jehovah for the blessings of peace and prosperity. The Lord of Nature is He Who has endowed Israel with unique privileges.

12. *Praise the LORD*] **Laud Jehovah.**
thy God, O Zion] As cxlvi. 10.

13. *he hath strengthened*] The same word is used in Neh. iii. 4 ff. of *repairing* or fortifying the wall and gates. All through Nehemiah's narrative appears the conviction that "this work was wrought of our God."

the bars of thy gates] There may be a particular reference to Neh. iii. 3, 6, 13, 14, 15.

thy children] Zion is regarded as the mother of its inhabitants.

14. **satisfieth** *thee* with *the* **fat** *of wheat*] Fulfilling His ancient promises. Cp. lxxxi. 16; Deut. xxxii. 14.

15, 16. A reminiscence of Is. lv. 10, 11. As in cvii. 20 the Word or command of God is personified. The word for *commandment* (lit. 'saying') is cognate with the verb *spake* in xxxiii. 9; Gen. i. 3, &c.

16. "Snow must always have been rare in Central and Southern Palestine," and "frost is very rare at Jerusalem." Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 28. They would therefore be more striking phenomena than they are to us; and it has been plausibly suggested that the Psalm was composed in or after an exceptionally severe winter.

17. *his ice like morsels*] Hail, like fragments or crumbs of bread.

19, 20. Cp. Deut. iv. 7, 8. The Lord, whose word all Nature obeys, has given Israel His word in the law; a privilege which distinguishes it from every other nation.

And *as for his* judgments, they have not known them.
Praise ye the LORD.

judgments] Or, *ordinances*.

PSALM CXLVIII.

Israel, rejoicing in the restoration of its national existence, calls heaven and earth to join in a diapason of praise. Let every heavenly being and every heavenly body unite to praise Him Who created them and sustains them (1—6). Let earth with all its phenomena and all its inhabitants praise Him for the revelation of His majesty (7—13). Especially has He given His people ground for praise by restoring them to honour (14).

Thus, though Israel's restoration is only briefly mentioned at the end, it is evidently the motive of the universal call to praise, and the thought that inspires the Psalm is the desire that not only all humanity but all creation should rejoice with Israel. Cp. cxvii. 1, 2. If man is the crown of creation, and Israel is Jehovah's servant for the redemption of humanity, then all things in heaven and earth must rejoice when Israel is raised from humiliation to honour. Cp. Is. xl—lxvi *passim*.

The Psalm implies the significance of Israel's history for the history of the world, and, in view of the unity of all being, for the history of the universe. It should be read in connexion with Rom. viii. 19 ff.; Rev. v. 13.

This Psalm was obviously written for liturgical use, and apparently, as may be inferred from *v.* 14, upon some special occasion. It bears a general resemblance to the other Psalms of the group, and may belong to the same epoch. It is an expansion of cxlv. 10, and *v.* 14 connects it with cxlix. 5, 9. The germ of it is found in Neh. ix. 5, 6. The *Benedicite* or *Song of the Three Holy Children* is based upon it.

Praise ye the LORD. 14
Praise ye the LORD from the heavens:
Praise him in the heights.
Praise ye him, all his angels: 2
Praise ye him, all his hosts.

1—6. Let the heavens and all that is in them praise Jehovah their Creator.

1. *from the heavens*] The anthem of praise is to ring out from heaven above, and to be answered from the earth below (*v.* 7).

in the heights] Of heaven (Job xvi. 19; xxv. 2).

2. Cp. ciii. 20 *a*, 21 *a*. *Hosts* may include both heavenly beings and heavenly bodies, and in Job xxxviii. 7 angels and stars join in praise: but here as in ciii. 21 the angels only seem to be meant (cp. 1 Kings

3 Praise ye him, sun and moon:
Praise him, all ye stars of light.
4 Praise him, ye heavens of heavens,
And ye waters that *be* above the heavens.
5 Let them praise the name of the LORD:
For he commanded, and they were created.
6 He hath also stablished them for ever and ever:
He hath made a decree which shall not pass.

7 Praise the LORD from the earth,
Ye dragons, and all deeps:

xxii. 19; Neh. ix. 6); the heavenly bodies follow in *v.* 3. The *Q'rē* and all the Versions read the plur. *hosts*; the *K'thībh* has the sing. *host*.

3. *all ye stars of light*] So the Heb. text. P.B.V. *stars and light* follows the LXX (Vulg.).

4. *heavens of heavens*] i.e. the highest heavens. Cp. lxviii. 33; Deut. x. 14; 1 Kings viii. 27 (=2 Chr. vi. 18); 2 Chr. ii. 6; Neh. ix. 6; Ecclus. xvi. 18. It is doubtful whether the idea of a plurality of heavens, three (2 Cor. xii. 2) or seven, which is prominent in later Jewish literature, was already current. See however Salmond in Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*, II. 321, who thinks that it is implied by this phrase.

ye waters that be *above the heavens*] The great reservoir of waters supposed to exist above the 'firmament,' the source of rain. See Gen. i. 6, 7; Ps. civ. 3.

5. *for HE commanded*] *HE* is emphatically expressed. Cp. xxxiii. 9, whence also comes the addition of the LXX, which is retained in P.B.V., *HE spake the word, and they were made.*

6. **And he hath made them stand fast**] To Him they owe not only their original creation but their perpetual maintenance. Cp. Ecclus. xliii. 26; Col. i. 17.

he hath made a decree which shall not pass] This rendering, which is that of the LXX (παρελεύσεται) and Jer. (praeteribit) may be defended by Esth. i. 19; ix. 27: but the general usage of the verb and subst. is in favour of the rendering, **He hath given (them) a statute which none (of them) shall transgress.** The 'law of gravity' and the other 'laws of nature' keep them fixed in their orbits and courses. For *chōq* (something prescribed, an enactment, statute) in the sense of the laws imposed on nature by Jehovah see Jer. xxxi. 35, 36; xxxiii. 25.

7—13. Let earth and all that is therein praise Jehovah for the revelation of His majesty.

7. *dragons, and all deeps*] The sea-monsters of Gen. i. 21, and the depths of ocean which they were supposed to inhabit[1].

[1] Robertson Smith (*Rel. of the Semites*, p. 161) suggests that the *tannīn* is a personification of the waterspout.

Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; 8
Stormy wind fulfilling his word:
Mountains, and all hills; 9
Fruitful trees, and all cedars:
Beasts, and all cattle; 10
Creeping things, and flying fowl:
Kings of the earth, and all people; 11
Princes, and all judges of the earth:
Both young men, and maidens; 12
Old men, and children:
Let them praise the name of the LORD: 13
For his name alone *is* excellent;
His glory *is* above the earth and heaven.
He also exalteth the horn of his people, 14
The praise of all his saints;

8. *Fire, and hail*] Lightning and hail are naturally coupled, as hail most commonly falls in thunderstorms. Cp. xviii. 12 ff.

vapour] The word elsewhere means *smoke* (Gen. xix. 28; Ps. cxix. 83); but must here mean the *mists*, which drift like smoke over the mountains.

9. Cp. civ. 16.

10. All kinds of living creatures: animals, wild and tame; reptiles and birds. Cp. Gen. i. 24, 25, 21.

11, 12. Last of all man, as the crown of creation (Gen. i. 26), is summoned to join the chorus, without distinction of rank or age or sex.

all people] Peoples, naturally coupled with *kings*.

13. is *excellent*] Is exalted, as in Is. xii. 4. On *excellent*, *excellency*, in A.V. and P.B.V., see note in Driver's *Daniel*, p. 32.

his glory] His majesty. Cp. viii. 1; civ. 1; cxlv. 5; Hab. iii. 3.

14. Israel's special ground for praise.

And he hath lifted up a horn for his people] He has once more given to Israel dignity and power. For the metaphor cp. lxxv. 4; lxxxix. 17, 24; xcii. 10, note.

The rendering of P.B.V., *he shall exalt*, is that of the LXX, *ὑψώσει*, and is adopted by some critics. But the tense expresses accomplished fact more naturally than confident anticipation.

the praise of all his saints] Lit. *a praise for all his beloved*; best taken in apposition to the preceding clause to mean that this national restoration is a theme of praise for all the members of the covenant people. The words may however be in apposition to the subject of the verb, and refer to Jehovah: *He...who is the praise* &c.: cp. Deut. x. 21, "He is thy praise." So the LXX, paraphrased in P.B.V., "all his saints shall praise him."

Even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD.

a people near unto him] Jehovah was 'near' to Israel (Deut. iv. 7; Ps. cxlv. 18); and Israel, as "a kingdom of priests" (Ex. xix. 6), stood in a unique relation of nearness to Jehovah. Cp. lxv. 4, note; Num. xvi. 5; Jer. xxx. 21. That relation, which seemed to have been interrupted by the Exile, has now been restored: Jehovah once more dwells in the midst of His people in the city of His choice.

This verse is quoted verbatim in the Hebrew text of Ecclesiasticus li. 12 (15). See p. 777.

PSALM CXLIX.

Another jubilant anthem, in which Israel is exhorted to praise Jehovah its Maker, Who has restored it to a position of dignity and honour (1—4); and a victorious triumph over all the nations of the world is confidently anticipated (5—9). In cxlviii. 11 the nations are summoned to join with Israel in the chorus of universal praise: here their obstinate hostility is represented as doomed to punishment. "That nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted" (Is. lx. 12).

This Psalm has been confidently assigned, and not without good reason, to the Maccabaean period. Religious ardour, united with a consciousness of vigorous strength, national enthusiasm coupled with passionate hatred of national enemies, were, it is pointed out, prominent characteristics of the Maccabaean period. The *ḥăsīdīm* of the Psalm are supposed to be the Hasidaeans, and in particular the "assembly of the *ḥăsīdīm*" (*v.* 1) is compared to the "company of the Hasidaeans" mentioned in 1 Macc. ii. 42. It is suggested that the Psalm was composed either for the re-dedication of the Temple in B.C. 165 (1 Macc. iv. 54), or for the rejoicings on the surrender of the Acra in B.C. 142 (1 Macc. xiii. 51).

The Psalm cannot however be separated from the other Psalms of this group, to which it is related in tone and language[1], and evidence has recently come to light, which seems to prove that two at least of these Psalms are earlier than the Maccabaean age. If the newly-discovered Hebrew of Ecclesiasticus preserves the original text, it is unquestionable that Psalms cxlvii, cxlviii were known to the author, and must therefore have been written earlier than the beginning of the second century B.C. In the hymn which follows ch. li. 12 in the Heb. text, though not in the Versions, *vv.* 6, 7, "Give thanks unto him that gathereth the outcasts of Israel, for his lovingkindness endureth for ever. Give thanks unto him that buildeth up his city and his sanctuary, for his lovingkindness endureth for ever," are based upon cxlvii. 2; and *v.* 15 is a verbatim quotation of cxlviii. 14. The hymn is an imitation

[1] Note that, like cxlvii, it is largely dependent on Is. xl—lxvi. See notes on *vv.* 2, 4, 7, 8, 9.

of Ps. cxxxvi (see p. 776), and it is clear from its whole character that Ben Sira has borrowed from the Psalms and not the Psalmists from Ben Sira.

Independently of this evidence the reasons urged in favour of the Maccabaean date are not so conclusive as they at first appear. The militant spirit of the Psalm has been exaggerated; *vv.* 5 ff., even if suggested by some recent success, are in the main no more than an adaptation of the language of prophecy, and may be quite general in their reference, anticipating the speedy approach of Israel's triumph over the nations of the world foretold by the prophets: the *chăsīdīm* of the Psalm are the nation, and not, as in 1 Macc., a particular religious party in it. Moreover, though the argument from silence is precarious, there is nothing in the Psalm to suggest that Israel was in the midst of a life and death struggle for its religion and its very existence.

If now the group is considered as a whole, it is from Ps. cxlvii that the clearest indications of date are to be obtained, and this, as we have seen, may best be assigned to the time of Nehemiah.

The "zealot temper" of the Psalm has been somewhat exaggerated. Still, as Delitzsch points out, its spirit is that of the O.T., not of the N.T., and its standpoint approximates to that of the Book of Esther. "Under the delusion that its language might still be used as a prayer without any spiritual transmutation, it has been made the watchword of the most horrible errors. It was by means of this Psalm that Caspar Scioppius in his 'Clarion of the Sacred War' (*Classicum belli sacri*), written, as Bakius says, not with ink but with blood, fired the Roman Catholic princes to undertake the Thirty Years' War. And within the Protestant Church Thomas Münzer employed it to stir up the flames of the Peasants' War. It is obvious that the Christian cannot make direct use of such a Psalm without ignoring the apostolic warning that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal (2 Cor. x. 4)." But the morality of the Psalm must not be measured by the Christian standard. Only by slow degrees could the lesson be learnt, that the conquest of the nations was to be achieved in a nobler way than by force of arms; and it must not be forgotten that even in the Apocalypse the judgement of the enemies of God and His people is a subject for earnest prayer and solemn thanksgiving (vi. 10; xi. 18; xix. 2).

Praise ye the LORD. 149
Sing unto the LORD a new song,
And his praise in the congregation of saints.

1. *Praise ye the* LORD] The liturgical *Hallelujah*. See on civ. 35.

Sing unto **Jehovah** *a new song*] In acknowledgment of new mercies. Cp. xxxiii. 3; xcvi. 1, note.

his praise in the **assembly of the beloved**] Cp. xxii. 22, 25; cvii. 32. The P.B.V., *let the congregation of saints praise him*, follows the LXX (Vulg.) and Jer. in adopting a possible but less probable construction, lit. *let his praise be* &c. The title *the beloved* or *godly* (see Appendix, Note I.) is used at the beginning, middle and end of this Psalm to

2 Let Israel rejoice in him that made him:
Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.
3 Let them praise his name in the dance:
Let them sing *praises* unto him with the timbrel and harp.
4 For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people:
He will beautify the meek with salvation.
5 Let the saints be joyful in glory:
Let them sing aloud upon their beds.
6 *Let* the high *praises* of God *be* in their mouth,

denote Israel, which had had fresh experience of Jehovah's loving-kindness. Cp. cxlv. 10; cxlviii. 14.

2. Jehovah is Israel's **Maker** (xcv. 6; c. 3; Is. xliv. 2; li. 13), for to Him it owes its original existence as a nation, and the present restoration of its national life; now that it has no earthly king, it acknowledges Him as its true King as in days of old (1 Sam. viii. 7; xii. 12), and celebrates the glory of His kingdom, which is universal (cxlv. 1, 11, 12, 13), yet in an especial sense has its seat in Zion (Is. lii. 7).

3. *in the dance*] This, and not *pipe* (A.V. marg.), is the right rendering here and in cl. 4. Dancing was a natural expression of joy among the Jews as among other nations of antiquity, in all periods of their history, on occasions of religious as well as secular festivity. Cp. Ex. xv. 20; Judg. xi. 34; 2 Sam. vi. 14; Jer. xxxi. 4; and for a description of the torch-dance, which formed part of the festivities of the Feast of Tabernacles in the later post-exilic period, see Delitzsch in the *Expositor*, 1886 (2), pp. 81 ff.; Hastings' *Dict. of Bible*, I. 550. Even the leading men of the city and famous teachers joined in it, and it was a current proverb that he who had not seen this joy had not seen any joy in his life.

timbrel] The tambourine, or hand drum, frequently mentioned in connexion with dances and processions (lxviii. 25).

4. *taketh pleasure in his people*] The deliverance which they have experienced is the proof of the renewal of His favour. Cp. cxlvii. 11; Is. liv. 7, 8; lx. 10.

he **adorneth** *the meek with salvation*] Through humiliation Israel has learnt humility; and now Jehovah restores their prosperity. *Beautify* or **adorn** is a word frequently used of the restoration of Israel in the later chapters of Isaiah (lv. 5; lx. 7, 9, 13, A.V. *glorify* or *beautify*). *Salvation* is not to be limited to *victory* (R.V. marg.), but denotes welfare and prosperity generally.

5. *Let* **the beloved exult in** *glory*] Let Israel triumph in the honour thus restored to them. Perhaps *glory* as in lxxxv. 9 may include the thought of the renewed manifestation of Jehovah's Presence among His people.

upon their beds] "Songs in the night" take the place of tears and sorrow (iv. 4; vi. 6). They can lie down in peace without the fear of being roused to repel a sudden assault (Neh. iv. 23).

6. *high* praises] Cp. lxvi. 17, note.

And a twoedged sword in their hand;
To execute vengeance upon the heathen, 7
And punishments upon the people;
To bind their kings with chains, 8
And their nobles with fetters of iron;
To execute upon them the judgment written: 9
This honour have all his saints.
Praise ye the LORD.

in their mouth] Lit. *throat* (cxv. 7).

a twoedged sword] So the LXX and Jer.; cp. Judg. iii. 16: but *a sword of mouths* means rather *a devouring sword*. So Nehemiah's builders prayed (iv. 9) and built with sword in hand (iv. 16 ff.); and Judas Maccabaeus and his followers joined battle with Nicanor, "contending with their hands, and praying unto God with their hearts" (2 Macc. xv. 26, 27).

7. *vengeance upon the* **nations**] Cp. Is. lxi. 2; lxiii. 4.

punishments upon the **peoples**] Lit. *corrections*.

8. The subjection and homage of the nations to Israel are repeatedly anticipated in the later chapters of Isaiah (xlv. 14; xlix. 7, 23; lx. 3 ff.). In Ps. ii the Messianic king, here the Messianic people, subjugates the nations.

their nobles] **Their honourable men**, as Is. xxiii. 8, 9; Nah. iii. 10.

9. *upon them*] The nations; not the kings and nobles only.

the judgment written] The sentence pronounced by Jehovah and recorded in His book (cp. Is. lxv. 6; x. 1; Job xiii. 26) for execution at the proper time; or the reference may be to the general testimony of law and prophets concerning the ultimate judgement of the nations. See Deut. xxxii. 41 ff.; Is. xli. 15 f.; Ezek. xxxviii, xxxix; Joel iii. 12 ff.; Mic. iv. 13; Zech. xiv; &c.

this honour &c.] **Honour shall that be for all his beloved.** The defeat of their enemies brings honour to Jehovah's chosen people. It is possible to render *He is the honour of all his beloved*, but this fits the context less well.

The LXX is probably right in omitting the final *Hallelujah*.

PSALM CL.

The Book of Praises fitly ends with this full-toned call to universal praise with every accompaniment of jubilant rejoicing. It may have been composed as a closing doxology for the whole Psalter, corresponding to the doxologies at the end of the first four books; but it would seem rather to have been intended primarily, like the other Psalms of this group, for liturgical use, and to have been placed at the end of the Psalter on account of its inherent fitness.

"This noble close of the Psalter rings out one clear note of praise, as

the end of all the many moods and experiences recorded in its wonderful sighs and songs. Tears, groans, wailings for sin, meditations on the dark depths of Providence, fainting faith and foiled aspirations, all lead up to this. The Psalm is more than an artistic close of the Psalter; it is a prophecy of the last result of the devout life, and in its unclouded sunniness as well as in its universality, it proclaims the certain end of the weary years for the individual and the world. 'Everything that hath breath' shall yet praise Jehovah" (Maclaren).

150 Praise ye the LORD.
Praise God in his sanctuary:
Praise him in the firmament of his power.
2 Praise him for his mighty acts:
Praise him according to his excellent greatness.
3 Praise him with the sound of the trumpet:
Praise him with the psaltery and harp.

1. *God*] El, the God of sovereign power (xc. 2).

in his sanctuary] This may mean the temple (cp. lxiii. 2, &c.), and the verse will then be a call to men to praise Jehovah in His earthly abode, and to angels to praise Him in heaven above. Cp. Ps. cxlviii. But it is better to understand it to mean heaven (cp. xi. 4). The whole verse will then be a *Sursum Corda*. Praise the holy God who dwells in His holy heaven (xx. 6), the firmament which is His handiwork and the witness to His omnipotence. This, and not *in his strong* or *indestructible firmament* (ἐν τῷ στερεώματι τῷ ἀκαθαιρέτῳ αὐτοῦ Symm.), seems to be the meaning of *the firmament of his power*. The P.B.V. *in his holiness* is in itself possible, but contrary to the parallelism.

2. *for his mighty acts*] Cp. cvi. 2; cxlv. 4, 11, 12.

according to the abundance of his greatness] Cp. 1 Chron. xxix. 11, "Thine is the greatness and the might."

3. *with the sound of the trumpet*] With blast of cornet. The 'cornet,' originally a ram's or cow's horn, perhaps in later times a metal instrument of the same shape, was mainly employed for secular purposes, while the instrument generally used in religious ceremonies was the *chatsōtserâh* or straight metal trumpet. Cp. however xlvii. 5; lxxxi. 3; xcviii. 6. It was ordinarily the work of the priests to blow the trumpet (1 Chron xv. 24; Neh. xii. 35, 41; and often); Levites are often described as playing psalteries and harps and cymbals (1 Chron. xxv. 1, 6; Neh. xii. 27); tambourines were beaten by women as they danced (lxviii. 25); the terms used for stringed instruments and pipes are not elsewhere connected with religious ceremonies. Thus the call to praise is addressed to priests, Levites, and people; and every kind of instrument is to be enlisted in the service.

psaltery and harp] Or, *harp and lyre*. The *nēbhel* and the *kinnōr* were both stringed instruments, but the precise distinction between them is unknown. There are some reasons for thinking that the *nēbhel*

Praise him with the timbrel and dance:
Praise him with stringed instruments and organs. 4
Praise him upon the loud cymbals:
Praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. 5
Let every *thing that hath* breath praise the LORD. 6
Praise ye the LORD.

(A.V. *psaltery* in the Historical Books and Psalms[1], *viol* in the Prophets) was the larger and more elaborate instrument. See Driver's *Joel and Amos*, p. 234; and for illustrations of ancient lyres and harps, see Stainer, *Music of the Bible*, Chaps. i, ii.

4. *with the timbrel and dance*] See on cxlix. 3. The P.B.V. *cymbals* seems to be a slip of Coverdale's, which was not corrected in the Great Bible, as he renders *tōph* correctly by *tabret*, i.e. a small drum, in cxlix. 3.

with stringed instruments and **pipes**] The word *minnīm*, 'stringed instruments,' occurs in xlv. 8 (R.V.): the *'ugābh*, mentioned in Gen. iv. 21; Job xxi. 12, xxx. 31, was probably the *syrinx* or *Pan's-pipes*, a wind instrument consisting of a collection of reeds or pipes. See Stainer, *Music of the Bible*, Ch. vi. The two terms may include string and wind instruments generally, as "harp and pipe" in Gen. iv. 21; and as the words are not elsewhere used in connexion with religious ceremonies, they may be meant to suggest that all instruments, secular as well as sacred, should be enlisted in this service of praise. The A.V. *organs* follows the LXX and Vulg.

5. *the loud cymbals...the high sounding cymbals*] **The clear sounding cymbals...the clanging cymbals.** Two kinds of cymbals are obviously meant: the first, lit. *cymbals of hearing*, may have been a smaller kind, producing a sharp, clear sound, possibly *castanets*: the second may have been a larger kind, producing a clanging, booming sound. "The Arabs have two distinct varieties, large and small.... They use their large cymbals in religious ceremonies, but the smaller kind seem to be almost limited to the accompaniment of dancers." Stainer, p. 137. For *cymbals* of hearing cp. 1 Chr. xv. 19, "with cymbals of bronze, to sound aloud," lit. *to cause to hear*; xvi. 5, "Asaph with cymbals, sounding aloud," lit. *causing to hear*. With the Sept. of the second phrase, *ἐν κυμβάλοις ἀλαλαγμοῦ*, cp. *κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον* 'a clanging cymbal' (1 Cor. xiii. 1).

6. *every* thing that hath *breath*] Heb. *all breath*, Vulg. *omnis spiritus*, Jer. *omne quod spirat*. Cp. Deut. xx. 16, Josh. x. 40. *Neshāmāh* most commonly denotes the breath of man; but it may include all animals. Not priests and Levites only but all Israel, not Israel only but all mankind, not all mankind only but every living thing, must

[1] These books were in the hands of the Westminster and Cambridge companies, and the Westminster company consisted mainly of Cambridge scholars, while the Prophets were in the hands of an Oxford company. In the Apocrypha also, which was revised by a Cambridge company, *psaltery* is used, but not *viol*.

join in the chorus of praise. The universe is Jehovah's Temple, and all its inhabitants should be His worshippers.

The Psalmist's words find their echo in the vision of the Apocalypse:

"Every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying,

"Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever."

HALLELUJAH.

APPENDIX.

Note I.

On the word Chāsid.

The word *chāsīd* is characteristic of the Psalter, in which it is found 25 times. Elsewhere it occurs only in Deut. xxxiii. 8; 1 Sam. ii. 9; Prov. ii. 8; Jer. iii. 12; Mic. vii. 2. (2 Sam. xxii. 26, and 2 Chr. vi. 41 are of course not independent passages.) It is variously rendered in A.V., 'godly,' 'merciful,' or, after the Sept. ὅσιος, Vulg. *sanctus*, 'holy,' 'saints.' Its exact meaning, however, is disputed. Is it (1) active, denoting the character of the man who practises dutiful love (*chesed*) to God and to his fellow-men (A.V. and R.V. 'godly' or 'merciful'): or (2) passive, denoting the state of one who is the object of God's lovingkindness (R.V. marg., 'one that He favoureth:' cp. A.V. marg. to lxxxvi. 2)? The form of the word is not decisive between the two senses, and appeal must be made to the usage of the word. In favour of (1) it is urged that the word certainly has an active sense in cxlv. 17 and Jer. iii. 12, where it is applied to God: and also in Ps. xii. 1; xviii. 25; xliii. 1; Mic. vii. 2; where it is used of the quality of lovingkindness between man and man.

On the other hand in favour of (2) it may be urged that the substantive *chesed* from which the adjective *chāsīd* is derived denotes in the Psalter almost without exception God's lovingkindness to man. It occurs there 127 times, and in three cases only is it used of man's love to man (cix. 12, 16; cxli. 5), though this sense is common elsewhere. It is never used in the Psalter of man's love to God, and indeed it is doubtful whether it is really so used at all. The passages generally quoted (Hos. vi. 4, 6; Jer. ii. 2) are not decisive.

If the primary meaning of *chāsīd* is to be governed (as seems reasonable) by that of *chesed* in the Psalms, it must certainly mean 'one who is the object of Jehovah's lovingkindness.' And this sense suits the predominant usage of the word best. It is used 15 times with a pronoun to express the relation of the covenant people, or individuals in it, to Jehovah (My, Thy, His *chasīdīm*), in connexions where the position into which they have been brought by Jehovah's grace is a more appropriate thought than that of their response to that grace either by love to God or love to their fellow-men. It is not man's love to God or to his fellow-man which is pleaded as the ground of acceptance or urged as the motive for duty, but the fact that Jehovah by His free lovingkindness has brought the nation and its members into covenant with Himself. In its primary sense then the word implies no moral praise or merit; but it

came, not unnaturally, to be connected with the idea of *chesed* as 'loving-kindness' between man and man, and to be used of the character which reflected that love of which it was itself the object; and finally was applied even to God Himself.

Note II.

On the Title 'Most High.'

The usage of the title 'Most High' (*Elyōn*) should be carefully examined.

(1) As used by non-Israelites, it appears as the designation of the Supreme God in the mouth of the Canaanite priest-king Melchisedek (Gen. xiv. 18—22); it is employed by Balaam (Num. xxiv. 16); it is put into the mouth of the presumptuous king of Babylon (Is. xiv. 14).

(2) Its application to Jehovah from the Israelite standpoint is limited to poetry. It occurs in Deut. xxxii. 8 (note the connexion with the partition of the earth among the *nations*); Lam. iii. 35, 38; and 21 times in the Psalter [and in 2 Sam. xxii. 14 = Ps. xviii. 13], always, with one exception (cvii. 11), in the first four books. It is nowhere found in the Prophets.

(3) In the Aramaic of the Book of Daniel it occurs, in one peculiar passage (vii. 18—27) in the plural of majesty; and a synonymous word is used frequently, but, with one exception (vii. 25), in the mouth of Nebuchadnezzar or Belshazzar, or in words addressed to them. It is used several times by the author of Ecclesiasticus, but still more frequently by his Greek translator, who employs it (ὕψιστος, without the article) not only for *Elyōn*, but for *JHVH*, *El*, and other names of God. It occurs also in 2 Macc. iii. 31.

Note III.

On the Hebrew Tenses.

The English reader may be at a loss to understand how it can so often be doubtful whether a verb should be rendered by the past or the future tense. The uncertainty arises from the peculiar character of the Hebrew Tenses, which denote *mode* of action rather than *time* of action. The fundamental idea of the 'perfect' (sometimes called the 'past') is *completed* action: the fundamental idea of the 'imperfect' (sometimes called the 'future') is *incomplete* action.

In simple narrative prose the 'perfect' usually refers to the past, and the 'imperfect' to the future. But in the higher styles of poetry and prophecy both tenses are used with much greater freedom.

(1) A future event may be regarded as having already taken place, either in order that it may be more forcibly presented to the mind, or because it is contemplated as being absolutely certain to happen; and in such cases the perfect tense, sometimes called the 'perfect of certainty,' or 'prophetic perfect,' is used. See Ps. xxii. 29; xxxvii. 20.

(2) A past event may be regarded, for the sake of vivid description, as being still in progress, and the 'imperfect' tense may be employed with reference to it. Thus in Ps. vii. 15, 'the ditch *he was making*' (imperf.) represents the wicked man as still engaged upon his plot when it proves his own ruin. This usage corresponds to the 'historic present,' and is very common in poetry.

The 'imperfect' is also used as a frequentative, of repeated action, and to express general truths.

Hence it is often doubtful, as in numerous instances in Ps. xviii, whether a Hebrew imperfect refers to the past or the future, and should be rendered by past, present, or future. The decision must be regulated by the context and the general view taken of the sense of the passage. Not seldom the peculiar force of the Hebrew tenses cannot be expressed in an English translation without awkward circumlocutions.

NEW TESTAMENT QUOTATIONS FROM THE PSALMS.

Psalm ii. 1, 2	quoted	Acts iv. 25, 26.
7	,,	Acts xiii. 33; Heb. i. 5; v. 5.
8, 9	,,	Rev. ii. 26, 27; xii. 5; xix. 15.
iv. 4	,,	Eph. iv. 26.
v. 9	,,	Rom. iii. 13.
vi. 3 *a*	,,	John xii. 27.
8	,,	Matt. vii. 23; Lk. xiii. 27.
viii. 2	,,	Matt. xxi. 16.
4—6	,,	Heb. ii. 6—8.
6	,,	1 Cor. xv. 27; Eph. i. 22.
x. 7	,,	Rom. iii. 14.
xiv. 1 *c*, 2 *b*, 3	,,	Rom. iii. 10—12.
xvi. 8—11	,,	Acts ii. 25—28.
10 *b*	,,	Acts xiii. 35.
xviii. 2 *b*	,,	Heb. ii. 13.
49	,,	Rom. xv. 9.
xix. 4	,,	Rom. x. 18.
xxii. 1	,,	Matt. xxvii. 46; Mk. xv. 34.
7	,,	Matt. xxvii. 39; Mk. xv. 29; Lk. xxiii. 35.
8	,,	Matt. xxvii. 43.
18	,,	John xix. 24; cp. Matt. xxvii. 35; Mk. xv. 24; Lk. xxiii. 34.
22	,,	Heb. ii. 12.
xxiv. 1	,,	1 Cor. x. 26 [28].
xxxi. 5 *a*	,,	Lk. xxiii. 46.
xxxii. 1, 2	,,	Rom. iv. 7, 8.
xxxiv. 8	,,	1 Pet. ii. 3.
12—16	,,	1 Pet. iii. 10—12.
20	,,	John xix. 36.
xxxv. 19 *b*	,,	John xv. 25.
xxxvi. 1 *b*	,,	Rom. iii. 18.
xxxvii. 11 *a*	,,	Matt. v. 5.
xxxviii. 11	,,	Lk. xxiii. 49.
xl. 6—8	,,	Heb. x. 5—7.
xli. 9	,,	John xiii. 18.
13	,,	Lk. i. 68.
xlii. 5	,,	Matt. xxvi. 38; Mk. xiv. 34.

Psalm xliv. 22	quoted	Rom. viii. 36.
xlv. 6, 7	,,	Heb. i. 8, 9.
xlviii. 2	,,	Matt. v. 35.
li. 4	,,	Rom. iii. 4.
liii. 1—3	,,	Rom. iii. 10—12.
lv. 22	,,	1 Pet. v. 7.
lxii. 12	,,	Matt. xvi. 27; Rom. ii. 6.
lxviii. 18	,,	Eph. iv. 8.
lxix. 4	,,	John xv. 25.
9 *a*	,,	John ii. 17.
9 *b*	,,	Rom. xv. 3.
21	,,	Matt. xxvii. 34, 48; Mk. xv. 36; Lk. xxiii. 36; John xix. 28, 29.
22, 23	,,	Rom. xi. 9, 10.
25	,,	Acts i. 20.
lxxii. 18	,,	Lk. i. 68.
lxxviii. 2	,,	Matt. xiii. 35.
24	,,	John vi. 31.
lxxxii. 6	,,	John x. 34.
lxxxvi. 9	,,	Rev. xv. 4.
lxxxviii. 8	,,	Lk. xxiii. 49.
lxxxix. 10	,,	Lk. i. 51.
20	,,	Acts xiii. 22.
xc. 4	,,	2 Pet. iii. 8.
xci. 11, 12	,,	Matt. iv. 6; Lk. iv. 10, 11.
13	,,	Lk. x. 19.
xciv. 11	,,	1 Cor. iii. 20.
14	,,	Rom. xi. 1, 2.
xcv. 7—11	,,	Heb. iii. 7—11, 15, 18; iv. 1, 3, 5, 7.
xcvii. 7	,,	Heb. i. 6.
xcviii. 3	,,	Lk. i. 54.
cii. 25—27	,,	Heb. i. 10—12.
ciii. 17	,,	Lk. i. 50.
civ. 4	,,	Heb. i. 7.
cv. 8, 9	,,	Lk. i. 72, 73.
cvi. 10	,,	Lk. i. 71.
45	,,	Lk. i. 72.
48	,,	Lk. i. 68.
cvii. 9	,,	Lk. i. 53.
cix. 8	,,	Acts i. 20.
25	,,	Matt. xxvii. 39.
cx. 1	,,	Matt. xxii. 44; Mk. xii. 36; Lk. xx. 42, 43; Acts ii. 34, 35; Heb. i. 13. Cp. Matt. xxvi. 64; Mk. xiv. 62; xvi. 19; Lk. xxii. 69; 1 Cor. xv. 25; Eph. i. 20; Col. iii. 1; Heb. i. 3; viii. 1; x. 12, 13; xii. 2; 1 Pet. iii. 22.
4	,,	Heb. v. 6; vi. 20; vii. 17, 21.
cxi. 9 *a*	,,	Lk. i. 68.
9 *c*	,,	Lk. i. 49.

Psalm cxii. 9	quoted	2 Cor. ix. 9.
cxvi. 10	„	2 Cor. iv. 13.
cxvii. 1	„	Rom. xv. 11.
cxviii. 6	„	Heb. xiii. 6.
22, 23	„	Matt. xxi. 42; Mk. xii. 10, 11; Lk. xx. 17; Acts iv. 11; 1 Pet. ii. 4, 7.
25, 26	„	Matt. xxi. 9; xxiii. 39; Mk. xi. 9; Lk. xiii. 35; xix. 38; John xii. 13.
cxxxii. 5	„	Acts vii. 46.
11	„	Acts ii. 30.
17	„	Lk. i. 69.
cxxxv. 14 *a*	„	Heb. x. 30.
cxl. 3 *b*	„	Rom. iii. 13.
cxliii. 2 *b*	„	Rom. iii. 20.
cxlvi. 6	„	Acts iv. 24; xiv. 15.

This list includes a few passages which are not formally introduced as quotations, though they are taken directly from the Psalms: but it does not attempt to collect the numerous indirect allusions and references to the thought and language of the Psalms which are to be found in the New Testament, and which are interesting and important as an indication of the writers' familiarity with the Psalter. See Note A in Archbishop Alexander's *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 291 ff.

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